

# DR. GRANTLEY'S NEIGHBORS

BY

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AND

ANNETTE LUCILLE NOBLE

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Eunice Hopkins at the Farm-house door.



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## PREFACE.

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TEN years ago the Presbyterian Board published an admirable little book called *Following the Master*. It was the first work of one who, although young in years, had early learned to do with her might what her hand found to do. The warm welcome it received induced her after that to write many shorter articles, which have from time to time appeared in our papers for the young and other journals, often anonymously. Mrs. Keeney wrote from no desire for a literary reputation, although her literary ability merited it, but, as one said in a notice of her first book, "out of sympathy with the sore wants of sorrowing, suffering humanity, and that she might show

## PREFACE.

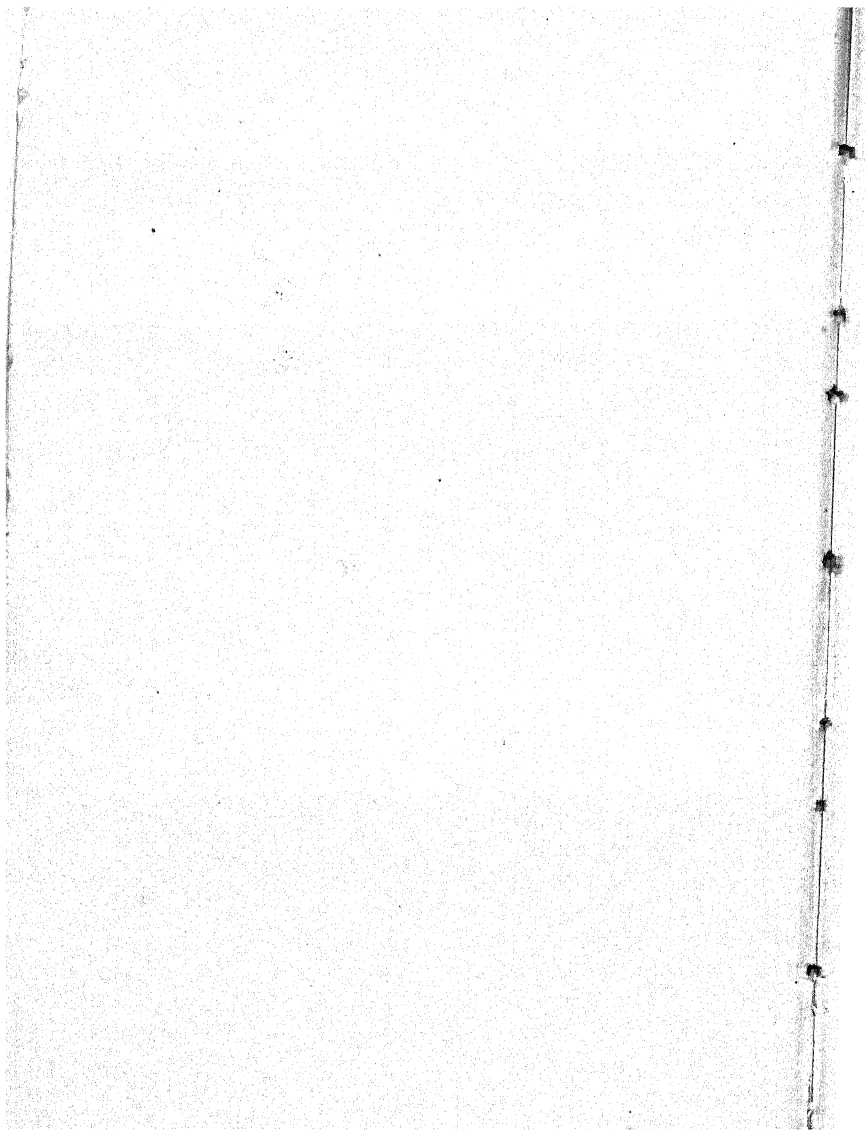
the work to be done by Christian hands and hearts."

The first part of this later story of *Dr. Grantley's Neighbors* was also written by her. It was only one of many things she was doing for the Master in the vigor of her young womanhood; but one day she laid them all down for ever. The summons came, and soon she was not, for the Lord had taken her. She was a person of marked individuality—a power in society and in the Church, for she had more than ordinary culture, with true spirituality. She knew how to win the approval of the old and how to make herself attractive to the young, while she gave help and sympathy to the poorest and lowest who crossed her path. She will be long remembered for her

"Gentle words where such were few,  
Softening blame where blame was true,  
Praising where small praise was due—  
For a waking dream made good,  
For an ideal understood,  
For a Christian womanhood."

In regard to the following narrative, it need only be said that when it was left no intelligible notes showed how it was to be developed, but to the friend who finished it Mrs. Keeney had often said, "Some time we will write a story together." So at last it has come to be written by the two, but neither was with the other as she wrote.

A. L. N.



# DR. GRANTLEY'S NEIGHBORS.

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## CHAPTER I.

"By two wings a man is lifted up from things earthly—namely, by simplicity and purity."

ONE lovely afternoon in June, Eunice Hopkins stood at the kitchen-door of her father's farm-house. Before her ran a beaten path, past the old well with its "moss-covered bucket," down into the garden, in which lettuce and onions, currants and raspberries, poppies and marigolds, were mingled in defiance of every rule of landscape-gardening. At the foot of the garden a clear, shallow stream rippled under the rudest of bridges; beyond were the "flats," where Deacon Hopkins's cows were ruminating so placidly that one might wonder if they had not an appreciation of the

sunshine and beauty which filled earth and sky.

Judging by Eunice Hopkins's face, the outside beauty failed to fill her soul with peace, for her brow was wrinkled, her eyes troubled. She was a tall, healthy-looking spinster of an uncertain age, or rather of an age you could be certain was not young. Everything about her indicated a person who would move when the motive-power came from within, seldom when it came from without. She held in her hand a letter, but her eyes were fixed on the distant flats, not as if she were watching the cows, but quite as if she had forgotten that such animals existed. At length, with an impatient "Well!" she turned around into the great cool kitchen with its sand-scoured floor and green-curtained windows, through which came the perfume of sweet honeysuckle and the sleepy drone of the bees. There was not in the farm-house a pleasanter room than this, with its dresser gorgeous with clean china and shining pewter, its old-fashioned clock, its chintz-covered rocking-chairs on each side of the little table, which held the Bible, a

work-basket and a pitcher full of garden flowers.

Eunice laid the letter beside the Bible, then seated herself to sew on a pair of blue jean "overalls," saying to herself,

"I wish father would come home."

For some time she rocked and sewed, pausing to bite off her thread with a snap or to hold her needle in mid-air while she mused. She started suddenly out of such a fit of meditation, and scudded (no other word will describe the motion) across the kitchen into the garden-path. A neighbor's rooster had scaled the fence and was about to alight on the strawberry-bed. Eunice, seizing a big stone, poised her arm to throw it. The unsuspecting fowl cocked his head and gave a saucy crow. In a second more the stone would have cleft the air, but a sound arrested Eunice's hand. Up from the flats came faintly the deacon's voice in singing. It was a cracked treble, yet it chimed in not unmusically with the song of the birds and the noise of the grasshoppers. Nearer and nearer it came, until Eunice, now gone back to the supper-table, could hear plainly the words:



"Cease, ye pilgrims, cease to mourn,  
Press onward to the prize:  
Soon the Saviour will return,  
Triumphant in the skies.  
Yet a season, and you know  
Happy entrance will be given,  
All our sorrows left below,  
And earth exchanged for heaven."

"Poor old man! He is tired to-night. He always sings coming home when it has been a tougher day than usual. It has been a hot day in the field. I won't show him this telegram until after supper, for it will bring up old troubles and take away his appetite. When a body gets a hearty meal, trouble can't take the life out of him, as it can when it comes on an empty stomach."

"Well, now, this is kind of refreshing," said the deacon, coming in from a wash at the pump and sitting back in his great wooden chair. "It's been a real scorcher, for a June day;" and he pushed back his white hair, on which the water still sparkled.

Deacon Hopkins was a "nice old man"—at least that was the verdict of every man, woman and child of his acquaintance. His attire was always plain, his dialect provincial,

yet a true judge of character would see in him the innate refinement of a gentleman, and, better still, that type of Christian character which comes only "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned."

"Yes," said Eunice, "I reckoned you'd be all tired out. I've made you a rousing cup of tea, and supper'll be ready in a minute. There's some of the lightest muffins you ever saw in the oven. They look as if they were stuffed with feathers. You always liked them."

"Yes, them *air* beautiful," said the old man, leaning forward to look into the oven. "What a daughter you are, Eunice, to work for your old father!"

"Well, why shouldn't I?" said Eunice, turning out the muffins. "There, now! it's ready. Eat them while they're hot."

The old man drew up his chair, and, after asking the never-omitted blessing, partook of a meal which would have tempted the daintiest appetite. No cook for miles around was more renowned for housewifely accomplishments than Eunice Hopkins.

She did not eat much that night, but talked of farm-matters in a preoccupied way. Suddenly she burst out:

"I declare, Father Hopkins! it seems as if I should do some dreadful thing if Grantley's pigs and chickens ain't kept off of our land. They've scratched and trampled my beds from end to end—*almost*," she added with spasmodic truthfulness. "I never came nearer to anything in my life than I did to letting fly a stone at that speckled rooster. If you'd only let me wring the necks of one or two hens, that would be the end of it."

"It would only be the beginning of it, sis. Don't you remember what the wise man says about the beginning of strife being like the letting out of water. You and I would find ourselves overwhelmed with hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. No, no, let brotherly love continue."

"It never started on the Grantley side of the fence," snapped this elderly "sis."

"But it *may*, Eunice, and my constant prayer is that it may receive 'an impulse' from *this* side."

"Well, it's most uncommon hard on hu-

man nature. I feel as if I must rebel sometimes."

"I know it's terrible provoking, but we must have patience if we would win him. 'Coals of fire,' you know—that's the Bible rule."

"Literal coals wouldn't hurt him much," sniffed Eunice.

"Why, daughter!" said the deacon in astonishment.

"I tell you, father, it would be a real satisfaction to *kill* that speckled rooster."

"Could you reconcile it with your conscience as a professed Christian?"

"Have a piece of pie?" asked Eunice evasively; adding a moment later, "I don't see as we are making much headway. You've been a-heaping Scripture coals on him for years and years, and yesterday, when my handsome guinea-hen flew over the fence, he shot her dead. I feel like an Old-Testament Jew—I want an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I'm not clear in my mind how far we were *meant* to do the other way. Of course the Lord couldn't have given a halfway rule, but he must have known,

when he said all that about how to treat folks that persecute you and despitefully use you, that charity *would* fail sometimes. We are told to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect; but I think that is because it wouldn't sound well as a rule to say, 'Be ye one-half or two-thirds perfect.' We can't be wholly perfect, I don't believe."

"I suppose," said the deacon, in answer to this doubly-negative proposition, "that it means we must be as perfect as we can—complete in patience and in good-will. That covers a good deal, Eunice."

It covered a "good deal" more than she cared to have it cover. So, thinking the case was not going in her favor, she changed the subject by saying,

"Judge Balcolm came here this afternoon to show you a letter he had written to some theological professor asking him to send a minister to occupy the pulpit next Sunday. I told him you were out in the west lot, but he said he hadn't time to go out."

"Well, I hope the Lord will send some one to this people pretty soon. This 'ere can-

derdating is enough to kill the piety out of any church."

"You'd better hope that the Lord will give the people wit enough to know the right man when he comes."

"There's a good deal in that," said the deacon, drawing back his chair.

Eunice waited until her father was comfortably seated on the west porch; then she brought the despatch, saying,

"Here is a telegram that came this afternoon; I thought I wouldn't give it to you until you were kind of rested."

"A telegram for me?" repeated the deacon with wide-open eyes. "Who can it be from?"

Eunice handed him the telegram without answering.

The deacon, putting on his spectacles, read,

"8— NINTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY.

"TO BENJAMIN HOPKINS:

"I am dying. If you wish to know about Benjamin or Benjamin's child, come immediately.

"MRS. BENJAMIN HOPKINS, JR."

The paper fell from the deacon's trembling fingers:

"When did this come?"

"This afternoon, about two o'clock."

"You'd orter have told me before; maybe I could have got an earlier start if I'd ha' known it."

"No, you couldn't. I kept the boy until I had read it, because I thought it might need an answer, and I asked him about the trains. You will have to go by Warrenton and take the eight-o'clock train in the morning. That'll get you into the city in the early afternoon."

"It seems strange," said the deacon, "that she'd send for me after hiding away from me so many years."

"Probably, now she's dying, she wants you to support the child," said Eunice. "Will you take it if she wants you to?"

"Why, of course," replied the deacon, looking at Eunice as if she had suddenly lost her wits.

There was a long silence, broken again by the deacon's voice:

"It would be kind of pleasant to have a little child in the house once more."

Eunice sniffed, and slapped the teapot into its place with more emphasis than usual.

"It must be nigh onto thirty years," he went on, not noticing his daughter, "since there's been one here. How pleased I was when Benjamin was born! I wasn't a professor of religion then, and I laid all sorts of plans as to what I'd make of him. Your mother always said that boys were a great responsibility, and she'd rather it would ha' been another girl, but I was mighty tickled at having a boy; I wasn't afraid but what I could bring him up. I tried my best after I found religion, but—" The deacon drew a long sigh and was silent.

"I've thanked the Lord a great many times," he began after a while, "that he took your mother when he did. It seemed an awful dark dispensation when she went, but when Benjamin got to going wrong, then I saw it was all right. It would just have broken her heart."

Here the deacon dropped into a long and painful reverie, from which he did not arouse himself until Eunice brought the Bible for family prayers.



## CHAPTER II.

"Such as any one is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly."

**D**R. GRANTLEY was born in Conesus Corners, where he grew up through boyhood until he went away to study. There were dark rumors as to his course of life during these years of absence, but no one had any positive knowledge concerning him. About a year after the death of his father he returned to the homestead and opened an office for medical practice in the village. The years of his residence in Conesus Corners had made him an influential but not a popular man. He had education, professional skill and considerable property, but he was called cynical, stingy and obstinate. He made no pretensions to being influenced by any higher motive than that decent regard for morality which society demands, and he believed in the professions of no one who claimed to be actuated by motives drawn

from any higher source. He called himself a hater of Sham, yet he made a household god of Prejudice.

The doctor's farm adjoined that of the deacon, and his door was within a stone's throw of the farm-house; but between the two families there was not even the pretence of intercourse. Had the dislike been on the side of the deacon, it would have caused less surprise, for it was generally understood that Dr. Grantley had in his student days enticed Benjamin Hopkins from home and introduced him into that course of life which ended in his ruin and death. People, forgetting that some natures hate more bitterly the man whom they have injured than they do the man who injures them, wondered at Grantley's hostility toward the deacon, of whom he usually spoke as "that old hypocrite."

The doctor's family consisted of Mrs. Tibbits, the housekeeper, and Helen Grantley, the orphan daughter of a cousin. Mrs. Tibbits was a small, weak-voiced widow, whose perpetual weeds seemed to have a mouldy, funereal smell, and whose manner was very

depressing. She was not morose, yet all her attempts at cheerfulness were so sickly that one learned to dread her efforts in that direction.

On the evening when our story opens Mrs. Tibbits rapped softly on the door of Dr. Grantley's library and whispered, with the hesitancy of one confessing a crime, that supper was ready. The doctor was reading a paper by the window, and did not answer or rise until he chose; then, going through several rooms better furnished but far gloomier than any in the Hopkins farm-house, he took his place at the table. Mrs. Tibbits was there, sheltered by a tall teapot, fluttered as usual lest he should miss some edible he wanted or espy something he did not want.

"Where's Helen?" he asked; adding, as she opened the door, "Why don't you come when you are called?"

Helen did not look at him, but dropped listlessly into her seat and began to help herself to bread and butter. It was a peculiarity at this table that no one attended to another's wants. The doctor helped himself first, then shoved the plates toward the others

if he felt so disposed; if not, they reached over and helped themselves. Dr. Grantley had no excuse for being a boor. On the rare occasions when a stranger sat at the table he behaved with the utmost propriety. As for Helen, she was too proudly shy to be rude, and was by instinct lady-like. She was a sallow-faced girl, about fifteen years old, with masses of light-brown hair wound ungracefully about her head. She had strong, well-cut features and large blue-gray eyes, which were, when kindled by excitement, her one beauty. This was not often true of them, for her life was most monotonous. She had few acquaintances, and no friends.

When tea was over the doctor pushed back his chair and started for his own room.

"Dr. Grantley," began Helen abruptly, for she had learned by experience that this man would not endure circumlocution, "can I learn something this summer—Latin or drawing or music?"

"Or dancing or wax-flowers," he sneered, looking at her a moment. "I suppose it don't make any difference *what*. Yes, you

can learn as much as you have a mind to learn."

"Where?"

"In the library and garret. There are five hundred volumes, more or less, in the library, and several boxes of pious trash in the garret, left by your father. What do you want to throw away money on other foolery for?"

"I ought to have teachers," she answered with a sort of sullen composure.

"Nonsense! What good would it do you to know how to whang on a piano from morning until night or to crock up paper with charcoal? Better learn something available, so that you can earn your own bread and butter. The world is too full of genteel paupers."

Without perceptible emotion of any kind Helen turned away. Dr. Grantley's consent would have surprised her far more than his refusal did. She helped Mrs. Tibbits wash the dishes, then she climbed the stairs to her own room. She did not fling herself down and cry passionately, feeling herself to be a neglected genius; she had not read novels enough for that.

Helen had been an inmate of the doctor's family for eight years. His father had taken her when a girl of seven from the orphan asylum where she had been placed after her father's death. On the farm Helen had grown up in a state of isolation which under other circumstances would have been impossible. As she never went to church or to school, she had no acquaintances among girls of her own age. The few who made friendly advances were repelled by a shyness which they mistook for pride.

"She is just like the doctor," was the village verdict: "she wants to be let alone."

Had her relations with the deacon's family been different, Eunice would soon have drawn the young girl out of this unnatural state, but on her first arrival at Conesus Corners, Helen had been forbidden to speak to any one who lived at the Hopkins farm-house. The deacon, who loved children, made many vain efforts to win the confidence of the little girl, whose sad face touched his loving, fatherly heart, but Helen always ran away without answering.

Dr. Grantley seemed to think that when

he had provided Helen with food and raiment he had discharged his whole duty to her. Mrs. Tibbits, who had once been a country school-teacher, instructed her in the rudiments of arithmetic, spelling and geography. But these lessons, which brought no pleasure to either teacher or taught, were discontinued so soon as Helen began to assert her own will. Dr. Grantley had a fine library, and Helen made her own many books seldom appreciated by girls of her age. She did not share Dr. Grantley's prejudice against religion, for she did not find that irreligion rendered him pleasing in any respect. She thought of theoretical Christianity as something like science, outside of and beyond her—something which time might make clear to her or might not. In fact, everything that troubled or puzzled Helen was in her present every-day life. It was irksome and void of incitement toward anything better.

She seated herself this evening by the window, and, taking up an arithmetic, began to figure out mentally some of the simplest problems. It would do no good, she

thought half bitterly, to grieve about the doctor's reception of her request.

Her room was furnished with old-fashioned, ill-matched furniture, but it had an air of individuality about it. There were some books, and shells, birds' nests and mosses picked up in her rambles. There were one or two rough sketches of natural scenery—not the work of a genius, but showing talent enough to justify her desire to learn to draw. There was a dingy portrait of a dark, solemn-looking man who Helen had been told was her father. She had always regarded the portrait with a sort of incredulous wonder, he seemed to belong to a time so far in the past. She found herself studying his face instead of the arithmetic. He was probably a minister; he was a very religious man, and would have brought her up to be religious. How would it have seemed? A religious Helen Grantley! She tried to fancy herself in that character, and failed—not so much because of the strangeness of the idea as because she had no vivid conception of *any* religious character whatever.

Moved at last by a new curiosity, she rose



up and searched for a concordance which she had once brought down from among her father's books in the garret. She found in it the word "Religion," and a reference to James i. 27. She had no Bible, but getting one from Mrs. Tibbits's room, she read: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

"A very well-sounding definition," she thought. "I wonder what it would mean worked out in my life?—'To visit the widow and the fatherless.'" Mrs. Tibbits and she herself were the only persons of either class of whom she knew, and they were not exactly in affliction; if they were, it would only amount to staying at home.

"To keep myself unspotted from the world." She laughed outright at this.

The world, if by that were meant its excitements and temptations, lay so far away from her! If it meant her world, the roof which sheltered Dr. Grantley and Mrs. Tibbits, she had nothing to do to keep "unspotted." Neither of these persons exercised an

elevating influence on her character, yet she felt no inclination to accuse them of "contaminating" her. It was a strange thing to say that she did not need religion; but if she had it, what would she do with it? She really could not see. What it would do with her was a question which did not occur to her to ask. Then, having the Bible in her hand, it served as well as the arithmetic to while away the time; so she opened it again: "All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing;" "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Helen was studying these verses when the pages slipped through her fingers and she opened to another place: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us."

She did not quite enter into the spirit of the first, but she understood it; before the second she stopped questioning. Was there a truth behind it? It must be something vast, wonderful. The first verses were like

a flat, gloomy, limitless landscape; the second like a beautiful golden barrier, suggestive of inner glories, yet unyielding, impenetrable. "The beauty of the Lord"! She could have found a meaning in the power or the goodness of the Lord, but the "beauty of the Lord," and the prayer that this beauty might be upon one! The longer she thought of the expression, the less she made out its meaning. Then, again, if all labor was vanity and vexation of spirit, why pray that the labor should be established? After all, the arithmetic was more intelligible than the Bible.

She pushed the book to one side, and, leaning out of the window, watched the deacon sitting on his porch:

"He is pious, I suppose, for he is a deacon in a church. I wonder what religion means to him? Perhaps too he knows what the 'beauty of the Lord' means." Then with a yawn, Helen added, "What a tiresome thing life is! I believe I'll go to bed."

### CHAPTER III.

"For divine charity overcometh all things, and enlargeth all the powers of the soul."

THE next morning Eunice was astir betimes, for there was the milk to be taken care of, the chickens to be fed, breakfast to be prepared and cleared away, and her father to be made ready for his journey. Eunice was fully equal to the emergency, and by seven o'clock she was driving old Bet to the railroad-station.

"I wish you were back safe and sound," she said as they drove along. "I don't think much of old folks skirmishing around the country alone. If it hadn't ha' been for the milk and chickens, I'd ha' gone with you."

"Law me !" said the deacon, "I can look after myself for a while yet. Besides, don't you suppose that the Lord can take just as good care of me in New York as in Conesus

Corners? Can't you trust your old father with the Lord, Eunice?"

"Yes," replied Eunice, in a tone which said plainly, "I suppose I have got to do it."

Many were the injunctions which the good deacon received from his daughter while they waited in the little station. He was not to put his head out of the window, not to get on or off the cars while they were in motion; he was to look out for his pocket-book, and not to share his seat with any smart-looking man, for "he was sure to be a sharper," and so on until the coming of the New York train.

In spite of his assurances to Eunice, the deacon felt a little nervous as he took his seat in the cars. New and not wholly pleasant were the experiences of the day, but five o'clock found him, carpet-bag in hand, climbing the stairs of a dingy tenement-house on Ninth Avenue.

"I wonder which room it is? I'll try the first," he murmured.—"Does Mrs. Benjamin Hopkins live here?" he inquired of a lady who answered his knock.

"She does," replied the lady. "I suppose this is Mrs. Hopkins's father-in-law?"

"Yes, ma'am. How is she?"

"Weak, but much excited at the prospect of seeing you. Would you like to bathe your face before you go in?"

"No, thank ye; I took a wash at the dépôt. I'll go right in, if I may."

The lady led the way through a room barely furnished with a few kitchen-utensils to a closed door. Opening it softly, she said,

"Mrs. Hopkins, Mr. Hopkins is here."

The deacon, looking through the open door, saw lying on the bed a young woman whose difficult breathing revealed the disease which was wasting her life.

"I am so glad you have come! All the time I have feared that you would not," she cried as the deacon went toward the bedside.

"I have been ready to come for five years, my daughter," said the deacon simply.

"Call you me your daughter? I thank you much." The great brown eyes of the sick woman grew bright, and she reached out her thin hand to the deacon, who laid it tenderly between his two horny palms.

"Are you not my daughter, the wife of my dead son, my only son?"

"But you did not like him to marry me. I have not been of your sort. You think I could not be a good wife to him. I meant to be good, for I loved him so much; but I not know what good is until this lady"—with a wave of her disengaged hand toward the lady, who was quietly arranging bottles on the table—"she told me about Jesus. She has been—oh, so good to me!"

"You must not waste your strength talking about me," said the lady, smiling. "You have much to say to your father, and we cannot tell how long this strength will last."

"It is true, it is true. At the beginning I will begin. This country is not my own country. In France I was born, and there lived until I was sixteen. Then my mamma died, and my papa came to America. He tried many things to live. Sometimes we play at the French theatre. Then papa, he hire some rooms and make them pleasant for gentlemen to come and play cards, and I sing to them and make them drinks. One time there come Dr. Grantley and your son.

After that they come many times, many times—not always to play, but to see me—and after a time they tell me that they love me, all two of them, for I have been pretty in those days,” said the invalid, a faint flush stealing into the thin cheeks. “I not love Dr. Grantley—I love your son. But my papa says I must marry Dr. Grantley, because he have money and an old rich papa who must not live long. But I are not for his money or his rich papa; I love him not at all. Then my papa has become angry. He says I will marry Dr. Grantley; I say I will not. Then Benjamin and I run away, and we are married.”

“Really married?” asked the deacon anxiously.

“Yes, really married—by a priest of your Church, a Prep—Prep—”

“Presbyterian?” suggested the deacon.

“That is it—a Presbyterian priest.”

“Presbyterian minister,” amended the deacon, who did not like the combination of words.

“A Presbyterian minister, and he gave me a writing. I have it laid away with



Yolande's things. Then we go to Cincinnati, and try to get work. There Benjamin was ill—oh, so ill! When he get better he talks about you. He says you are so good, and he talks about his sister Euneece, and wants to see her; and he talks about the country, and he longs for it. One day he makes me find little Bible his mamma give him years, years gone, and he reads it. Then he calls me, and he reads me about a young man who takes all his money and go far away and spends it all, until he so poor he have not to eat; then he says he will go back to his father, and all ragged he gets; and his father see him a long way off, and runs out of the house down into the street to meet his wicked young son, and puts his arms around his neck and kisses him. He is so glad—so glad to have his son again! In Benjamin's eyes, as he read, there came big tears, and he said he himself like that—"

"Prodigal," suggested the lady as the speaker hesitated for a word. The deacon was too choked for utterance.

"Like that prodigal, and he would do the same thing; he would go to his father's

house. Then I said, 'You are not like that prodigal; you have a wife; you have no right to go leave her.' Then he said he no leave me, never; his father's house and heart big enough for all. Then I say he have no money to go, and he says he can send to you. Then I cry much, much, and I say I will no go to his father as one beggar. Benjamin he tries to get me to go, but I only cry more, more, until he tear up the letter he begins and says we go not. I am so sorry now for this!" she faltered, her hand caressing the deacon's bowed head; "but in those days I was so afraid of you and of Benjamin's sister Euneece.

"After a while Benjamin gets better; then the baby comes, and Benjamin he wants to call her Euneece, but I say, 'No;' she must be Yolande, for that is my name, and the name of my mamma, and of my mamma's mammas, back I know not how far? Then Benjamin say, 'We will name her Yolande Euneece;' but I call her always Yolande.

"We could have much more money, but my husband never lets me play in the theatre after I marry him. He is the one to earn

the bread, he says, and he works hard. We have small rooms, but so clean and bright; and by and by the baby make Benjamin want to show her to his father, she grows so pretty. I promise we all go when we go not quite so poor as beggars. Benjamin's old friends come sometimes to see him, but he is not glad; he never calls me to sing. One night I am with the little child sewing when gentlemen call in the little parlor. I hear soon loud talk like a quarrel, then a pistol-shot. I rush in: Benjamin bleeds on the floor, and Dr. Grantley stands over him with the pistol."

"*Grantley?*" gasped the deacon.

"Yes, Dr. Grantley," whispered the woman, whose horror-filled eyes seemed again to behold the scene she was describing.

"You ought not to talk any more now," said the lady, coming to wipe her forehead, on which the death-sweat was already standing. "You must take some wine and rest a little."

"I dare not," cried the dying woman. "I have short time to live and long to say; I must talk."

"Go on if you can," said the deacon, in a voice so changed that both his hearers wondered.

"I threw myself down beside Benjamin, and when I called his name his eyes opened and his lips moved. He whispered, 'Baby;' so they brought the baby, and when he looked out at us his eyes grew tender-like and he tried to speak. I put my ear to his lips, and I heard, 'FATHER! *God, have mercy!*' He motioned as he would kiss the baby, and I put her down to his face, so near her little golden curls were dipped in his blood. O mon Dieu! mon Dieu! the curls of my babe in the blood of her father!" cried the woman, shaking as with an ague.—"Wine! more wine!" she gasped; "my strength go fast.—When I saw this I became as one dead, and when I again knew I was in bed. Then came there to me a man, who also was present, who said I must not tell that Dr. Grantley had the pistol. I said, 'I shall tell it; I shall have his life for my Benjamin's life.' And he talks—oh, much talk—and he says that I have no money for me and my child—that if I shall not tell, that Dr.

Grantley will give me money. He takes out a roll of bills. Then I fling away his money, and I say, 'I will not sell my husband's blood for money;' and the man went away.

"But after a time he comes again, he and another man whom I know, and they all two talk, and they say how Dr. Grantley have run away, so I cannot get him, and it was pure accident, but if I make fuss the trouble will be theirs, instead of Dr. Grantley's. Then the first man, who has been good to Benjamin and me, he says he have important business in New York, and if I make trouble he will have to stay as a witness, which makes him much annoyance. He says also that he glad I take not Dr. Grantley's money; I shall need not so long as I make no fuss. Then I am wild, wild, with the talk of all two, and I say, 'I can do nothing but go to New York.' So I come, and he is very good to me, and he sends me money many times until I get work. But for a long time I have heard not from him, and I think he be dead. After I be in New York I remember me that you are Benja-

min's father and that he loved you; so I find an old letter telling where you live, and I write you that Benjamin is dead, but I let you not know where I live, for I think you are a hard man. I find not my papa, for whom I look, but I grieve not very much, for he was little good to me. So Yolande and I live here years, years. Then I take sick, and I know I will die as died my mamma, and my heart it breaks for my little one whom I must leave; and I have much fear to die, for I have not any religion. Then comes this lady: she talks to me of Jesus—talks until I love him, so that then I fear not to die, but I fear for Yolande to live. I tell the lady all my life-story, and she says she will send for you. I have fear that you would come not," she continued in a voice which grew ever weaker, "but God is so good!"

"Can you forgive Dr. Grantley?" asked the deacon, leaning forward.

"Yes, *now*. All these years my heart is so bitter, bitter, toward him I curse him day by day. Now I can pray for him; but it was not at once, only after long time—

not until the lady read from the holy Book. —Will you read me those words again, please? This makes me need them.”

The lady in a clear, sweet voice read, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

“‘As God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you,’” repeated the deacon slowly. “Yes, yes, we must feel that God helps us to do so.”

There was a moment’s silence. Then the deacon leaned forward, and, taking again in his the hand he had dropped, said,

“Daughter, God has made a special promise to hear the prayer of two who are agreed. There is no one in the world who can pray for Dr. Grantley as you and I can. Let *us* pray.”

Falling on his knees beside the bed, the deacon prayed. Had his prayer been for his only son, instead of being for that son’s destroyer, he could not have pleaded more earnestly.

"She is dying!" cried the deacon as, rising from his knees, he looked into the face of his daughter-in-law.

"I think she will rally again," said the lady, applying restoratives. "You had better go into the other room a while; I will give her rest and air."

"Air?" exclaimed the deacon, wiping his forehead; "I'd like to know where you will find it here. If we could only have had her at the farm months ago, we might have saved her."

The lady shook her head: "It might have prolonged her life, though I have doubts even of that, from what she has told me. I judge it is the family disease: mother, grandmother, aunts, all died of it."

"And the little girl, is she delicate too?" asked the deacon anxiously.

"I cannot tell; she is the picture of health now. She has gone out with my daughter, but she should be back by this time."

As the deacon, buried in painful thoughts, sat in the kitchen, the outer door opened and a young lady and child entered.

"Is that my grandpa?" cried the child in



a clear, ringing voice, stopping short at sight of the deacon.

"Yes, dear, I'm your grandpa."

Yolande came near and studied fixedly the deacon's face. The scrutiny seemed satisfactory, for, leaning her hand on his knee, she said,

"Take me up in your arms, grandpa."

The deacon had gone through much that day—gone through all with outward composure—but the words of his little granddaughter, Benjamin's child, unsealed the fountain of tears which had been frozen by the story of her father's death. Lifting her in his arms, he pressed her close to his heart, while the tears fell fast on the brown curls. Yolande showed no astonishment; possibly she was accustomed to baptisms of tears. She only patted softly the furrowed cheeks of her grandfather, whispering,

"Don't cry, grandpa; Yolande will love you."

When the deacon had mastered his emotion he looked down into the face lying so trustfully on his bosom to find in it some resemblance to his son. He found none;

it was the face of the mother—the same great brown eyes, but filled with joy instead of suffering; the same flexible mouth, without the lines which pain had drawn; the same golden-brown hair, not closely cut, as was the sick woman's, but falling below the waist in a mass of ringlets. The deacon sighed. Benjamin's daughter, had she resembled her father, would have lost the beauty she now possessed, yet the deacon would have been quite as well pleased had some of the homely features of his own family been reproduced in the little one.

"Why don't mamma ask for me?" said Yolande, raising her head from her grandfather's arm. "Miss Mary said I was not to go to her until she asked for me. I want to go! I want my mamma."

"Your mamma is very tired; you must let her rest," said the deacon, drawing Yolande's head into its place.

Later in the evening the dying mother rallied, and talked again with the deacon of her plans and wishes for her child; but when the morning sun shone into the dingy tenement-house it found Yolande an orphan.

## CHAPTER IV.

"For not every desire proceedeth from the Holy Spirit, even though it seem unto a man right and good."

THE Rev. Justus Halsay was in a quandary. The evening mail had brought him the following letter:

"DEAR HALSAY:

"Returning home after an absence of some days, I find the enclosed letter awaiting me. Can't you go? I believe your engagement at Litchville was only for three months. Do go on Sunday if you possibly can. You see, they rely on me for a supply. Drop me a line by return mail. In haste,

"EDWIN E. MARCUS."

The enclosed letter was written in a stiff, cramped hand, and ran thus:

"TO THE REV. EDWIN E. MARCUS, D. D.

"ESTEEMED SIR:

"It having pleased Almighty God to incapacitate for labor the Rev. Peter Martin, who has gone in and out before this people for the last fifteen years, it devolves upon me, as chairman of the committee on pulpit-supply, to seek for a pastor who shall take his place and break to us the bread of life. Believing that you, sir, are a man of sound views, I feel assured that any one whom you would recommend would preach sound doctrine, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Our pulpit will be unsupplied next Sabbath; can you send us a candidate? I would not so far trespass upon your valuable time as to request an answer to this epistle; so, unless I hear to the contrary, I shall depend upon you for a pulpit-supply next Lord's Day.

"Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

"ZECHARIAH BALCOM."

The three months for which Mr. Halsay had been engaged by the Litchville church would expire in three weeks, when the ab-

sent pastor would return, so the prospect of another change was most pleasing to the young minister. He would find no difficulty in supplying his own pulpit during his absence, for a minister visiting in Litchville was only too glad to occupy it. The question which was wrinkling Mr. Halsay's brows was, "What sermon shall I take?" There was no time to prepare a new sermon, and a selection from those previously written was difficult to make. The Rev. Justus felt a natural anxiety about this his first candidature, and was desirous of preaching his best.

There lay before him twenty-nine clean, unrumpled sermons, with the subject written neatly upon each cover, and lower down a date and place of delivery. Nine were his best seminary efforts; these he put aside without examination. The remaining twenty, written during the time he had supplied the pulpit at Litchville, were quickly sorted into two piles:

"These are my best eight; now for the best two."

The next selection was made more slowly, but at last he laid out three, saying,

"I would be satisfied to preach any one of those. There is my Egyptian sermon: 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt.' That sermon represents two weeks' hard work; I made the notes for it during my last vacation. I studied Bunsen, Uhlemann, Lepsius, Champollion, Wilkinson, and I don't know how many more. If I could only use the seminary library now! When I want to look up a subject I am sure not to have the books. Many times I have a vague recollection of what I want; five minutes in a library and I'd be all right. I was troubled to get this sermon short enough, I had so many notes from my readings. When I first wrote it out it was sixty minutes long. Of course that would not do. Finally, I cut it down to thirty, but that made the practical part very short. The 'treasures in Egypt' were so interesting that I had only a few moments for 'the reproach of Christ.' We will call that my scholarly sermon, for scholarly it certainly is.

"This is my poetical sermon: 'So the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the

flowers appear upon the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell.' It's full of metaphors and similes; then it has that exquisite poem of Wordsworth's. What an advantage to a minister to be a good reader! Prof. G—— used to say he never heard even a professional reader render Wordsworth better than I did. I think I'll take that for one. Now for the other! Shall I take this one on Egypt or this one: 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin'? Shall I be poetical and scholarly or poetical and logical? Positively, I can't decide. I am tempted to do as I used when a boy—to shut my eyes and take the one my finger falls on. I'll do it."

With a smile at his own childishness the Rev. Justus closed his eyes, waved his fore finger in the air, then let it fall on the out-spread sermons.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, as, opening his

eyes, he found his finger resting on one of the rejected twelve; "that illustrates the foolishness of such tests. What sermon is this? 'The Love of Christ.' Oh yes, a good sermon, if by good one means a good-doing sermon. Several persons have told me that it had helped them in their Christian life. I never realized more clearly what the love of Christ meant than when I was writing that sermon. But it is not at all the sermon to take when candidating; there is in it nothing original or fine. One needs to take a sermon that shows him at his best, for—"

Mr. Halsay stopped suddenly, while a crimson flush mounted to his forehead. Hastily pushing back the sermons, so that the "best eight" and the "rejected twelve" lay in utter confusion, he fell upon his knees with the cry,

"O my Master, forgive me! I have consecrated myself to thy service, and now I forget thy service in self. I am to speak for thee to immortal souls whom I may never meet again on earth, yet I think neither of them nor of thee. I want to show well *myself*—to impress them with *my* intellectual

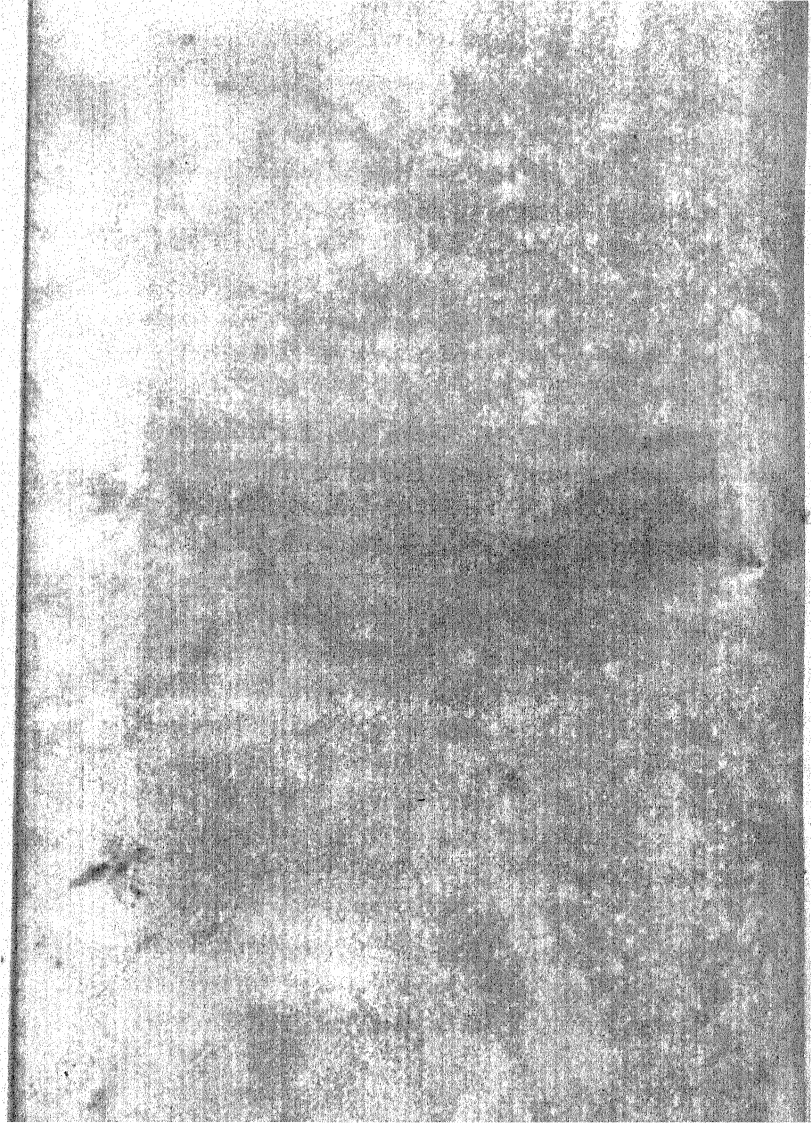


ability. Take from me all thought of self; let me forget the messenger in the message. Help me to choose such sermons as shall do the most good. Let me, O my Master, win some soul to thee, reveal to some soul the boundless depth and breadth of thy love. Grant this, and the people may, if it be thy will, call me a fool. Forgive and help me."

Arising from his knees, he began in a different spirit a second examination of the sermons.



This is Benjamin's child.



## CHAPTER V.

"There is scarcely anything wherein thou hast such need to die to thyself as in seeing and suffering those things that are contrary to thy will; especially when that is commanded to be done which seemeth to thee inconvenient or useless."

SATURDAY afternoon found Eunice and old Bet waiting at the station.

"There they are!" exclaimed Eunice as the deacon and Yolande descended from the cars.

"Well, how do you do, Eunice?" said the deacon, mounting with difficulty into the chaise. "This is our little girl, Benjamin's child.—Yolande, this is your aunt Eunice."

"She'll have to sit in your lap, father," said Eunice, scarcely noticing the deacon's introduction. "Now, are we all ready?—G'lang!"

Eunice Hopkins was one of the few people who can refrain from asking questions, so the story which the deacon dreaded to tell was not called for until supper was over, the work

"done up" and Yolande tucked in the little bed which Eunice had prepared for her in her own room. Then Eunice heard all without any of those outward signs of emotion which her father had expected. During his narration she asked several questions, but when all was told her only remark was, "I always knew there was a black side to it. —The clock struck ten some time ago; we had better go to bed," handing the deacon at the same time his Bible and spectacles.

It was well for the peace of her father that he did not see Eunice rise from her knees and sit bolt upright in her chair during his fervent petition for Dr. Grantley.

"We must be good to the child for Benjamin's sake," said the deacon, a little troubled by Eunice's manner.

"I shall try to do my duty by her," was Eunice's rather unsatisfactory reply as she lighted her candle to go up stairs.

Reaching her room, she placed the candle on the table and sat down by the window. Eleven, twelve, one, rang through the silent house, but Eunice did not move. The candle sputtered and went out, but she did not even

notice it. The first gray light of the dawn found her sitting in the same place. The sight of her father bringing in some wood to start the fire aroused her to the activities of life. Rising noiselessly, so as not to awake Yolande, who was still sleeping, Eunice changed her afternoon alpaca for her working dress and went down to make ready the breakfast. When she entered the kitchen her father was standing in the east door. The deacon had never read Herbert's lines beginning,

"O day most calm, most bright—"

possibly he would have thought them too fanciful if he had done so—but the same emotion which moved the poet to write those quaint, sweet words was thrilling the deacon's heart this morning.

"Did you ever think, Eunice," he said, turning around as she entered the room, "that the whole earth knows when Sunday comes? The very sky looks bluer, the grass greener. Just look at that robin singing loud enough to burst his throat! Don't you s'pose that he knows to-day is better than yesterday?"

It always seems to me as if the dumb creeturs had stood by and heard the Lord bless the seventh day and hallow it, and the first ones had told their young ones, and so on down. I ain't at all sartain that these dumb creeturs don't know a great deal more than we think they do. I've seen some 'mazing 'cute ones."

The deacon subsided into philosophical reflections upon the probable limitation of brute intelligence, from which he was interrupted by Yolande, who came dancing in, holding up her unbuttoned dress with both hands.

"Law me, child!" said Eunice, surprised out of her silence, "I was coming up to dress you pretty soon."

"I can dress myself," replied the little maiden with dignity, "only I can't button up my dress; but grandpa can do that," running over to him with a skip, hop and jump.

"Hush, hush, child! to-day is Sunday."

"Isn't Sunday a nice day here?" asked Yolande, stopping short.

"Yes, dearie, the nicest day of all the week."

"Why must I hush? why can't I jump?"

"Because it's a holy day. 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it,'" repeated the deacon reverently.

"Oh! I see," said the child. "Poor God work hard, get tired and want to rest, just as mamma used to. Sometimes she said it tired her to see me jumping. Is that why God don't want me to do so to-day?"

"Not exactly," answered the deacon, smiling at the child's fancy. "You jump up in my lap and I'll tell you about it. You see," he began, when Yolande was comfortably settled, "that God in the beginning made everything—"

"Did he make you and Aunt Eunice?" interrupted Yolande.

"Yes, but not in the beginning—not till a long time after."

"How long ago did God make everything?"

"Oh, thousands and thousands of years ago."

"And hasn't he got rested yet? How



tired he must have been!" cried Yolande in astonishment.

"I did not say he was tired. If you keep talking so I can't tell you anything about it."

"I won't say another word," said Yolande, pressing her rosy lips tightly together.

"Well, as I was a-saying, after God had made everything he stopped and blessed the seventh day; and he wants all his people to stop working on that day and think about him, because when they think about him they love him, and God wants them to love him because he loves them so."

"But I can love God when I am jumping."

"But s'pose your aunt Eunice and I should go to skipping and jumping, do you think you could think about and love God while we were doing it?"

"No," replied Yolande, quite certain that the sight of her grandfather and Aunt Eunice skipping and jumping would drive all solemn thoughts out of her mind.

"Well, you mustn't do anything to keep you from thinking about and loving God;

and if there's anything you can do, and love God while you are a-doing of it, you mustn't do it if it is a-going to keep other folks from thinking about and loving him. Would you like to learn a Bible-verse about Sunday?"

Yolande assented.

"It's a pretty hard one, but I learned it when I was a little shaver about as large as you be. I'll repeat it to you: 'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'"

Before the deacon had answered Yolande's questions as to what the verse meant, Eunice called them to breakfast.

When breakfast was over and the kitchen restored to its Sabbath order, the deacon

took his Bible and began turning over its leaves to choose a chapter for family prayer. His choice fell upon the third chapter of the First Epistle of John.

Eunice, wrapped in painful thought, paid no attention to the reading until she was startled by these words: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." She started from her chair with a smothered exclamation.

The deacon paused in his reading and looked over his spectacles surprised.

"That speckled rooster is in the strawberries again," said Eunice, coolly settling back into her chair.

The deacon drew a long sigh. He was both astonished and grieved to find his daughter's mind on such a trifle. With a half-unconscious perception of Eunice's need he had chosen this chapter, so full of exhortations to brotherly love, but Eunice seemed to care more for a few strawberries than for these solemn words. If all the speckled roosters in the neighborhood had gathered in the deacon's strawberry-patch, their pres-

ence could not have disturbed his peace this morning.

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," kept sounding in Eunice's ears. It seemed to her that the words stood out clearly before her eyes everywhere she looked.

The deacon, going out-doors a few moments later, found Eunice leaning against the wood-house door.

"Why, Eunice," he remarked, "you've got one of your bilious turns a-coming again, ain't you? I thought you looked kind of yaller all the morning. You'd better lie down a while."

Eunice went to her room, but not to rest. She sat still and thought until the time came to prepare Yolande for church, and she drew a sigh of relief when the departure of her father and Yolande left her in the longed-for yet dreaded solitude. After watching them until they had disappeared down the road she went back to her bedroom. She closed the door; then, taking from the stand-drawer a nail, she ran it in over the latch. Whom she expected to keep out by this patent lock she could not

herself have told. Placing her Bible upon the stand, she sat down before it.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” Did she hate James Grantley? Eunice was too honest with herself to attempt any denial: she hated him as the man who had ruined both in body and soul the brother whom she idolized. This morning the image of the boy Ben arose before her—a bright, fun-loving boy, revealing no tendency to evil courses until he fell under the influence of James Grantley. How fond she had been of Ben! She remembered how, when he was a little fellow in calico frocks, she, the ten-year-older sister, had laid aside every penny which came into her hands that Ben might have toys and candy. Later her love became ambitious: Ben should be a minister. She had not in those days thought much of the spiritual qualifications, but she knew that an education was necessary; so she had scrimped and saved, worked early and late, to gather the necessary means. She had laid aside the first dollar when she

was fifteen. Money was not plentiful at the Hopkins farm-house, but at thirty Eunice had five hundred dollars in the Warrenton bank. She made her last deposit in February; in March, Benjamin ran away from home with James Grantley.

There had been times during the last years when she had thought bitterly of her disappointed hopes. This morning they did not even come into her mind. One absorbing, horrible thought banished all others—the brother whom she loved as she loved no other being was a lost soul. She had known for four years that Benjamin was dead, but had known no more. Never until last night had she realized how the hope that there had been time for repentance had taken possession of her. Her father's story had destroyed the last shadow of hope.

The very facts which caused hope to spring up in the heart of the deacon had destroyed it in the heart of his daughter. The deacon liked to think of Benjamin reading the story of the Prodigal Son and longing to come home to the innocent life of his boyhood. Eunice shrank from all this with positive

pain. To her it was the last striving of the Spirit, the last call, which Benjamin had refused to hear. No, he had not refused to hear. He had heard, and might have obeyed had it not been for that French woman—the “French woman” and James Grantley. Bitter was the hatred which filled Eunice’s heart toward these two. Had it not been for them her brother might be leading an honored, useful life. And they, the guilty ones, would they receive the punishment due their sin? No. The “French woman” was in heaven, as the deacon believed; James Grantley would repent and be saved. Eunice could not believe that God would suffer a good man like her father to be so impressed to pray for a man unless he intended to grant his prayers. For the last few years Deacon Hopkins had prayed often for James Grantley. He had sought to exorcise by prayer the first bitterness from his own heart. Each additional injury received seemed but to increase his fervor. James Grantley would be saved—Eunice was sure of that; James Grantley and the “French woman” would spend an eternity rejoicing in the love of

God; Benjamin, whom they had lured to ruin, was lost. To this she must say, "It is well!" *Well* that the brother whom she loved so tenderly was lost?

Could she say, "It is well"? Eunice's logic was conclusive. She *could*, because she *must*.

"There is a God" was a truth beyond all question in Eunice's creed. This truth went further than her creed; it entered into her very being. This God must be just and must be almighty.

Lacking either of these attributes, he would fail to be God. Had God given Benjamin a fair chance? Eunice must admit that he had. Born into a Christian family, surrounded on every side by good influences, he had voluntarily turned his back on them and chosen a life of outbreking sin. Even then God did not leave him; even in his sin the Spirit had called—called only to be rejected. No; Benjamin Hopkins, standing in the presence of his divine Judge, could plead no injustice in his sentence. But could not Benjamin's sister, seeing the salvation of others more guilty than Benjamin, cry out,



"Why? O my God, why?"

She did thus cry, but the heavens vouchsafed no answer, so Eunice came back to her theology.

God, being God, could will no final injustice; being almighty, he must be able to carry his will into execution. Final justice must be done to every creature in the universe. Could she in reason ask more? Could she, a finite being, instruct an infinite one? Was she, who knew not what an hour would bring forth, wiser than He who knew the end from the beginning? Could she not leave herself and all dear to her in the care of a just, all-knowing God.

"I must," was Eunice's answer; but only after hours of struggle could she say, "I will."

Even after she could acquiesce in the will of God she did not forgive. It seemed to her that she had never so hated James Grantley. The depth and bitterness of her hatred terrified her.

"O God," she cried in agony of soul, "I hate him, and I cannot help it."

Rising from her chair for the first time

since she had seated herself before her Bible, she fell upon her knees. She was still praying when she heard her father's voice calling "Eunice!" at the chamber-door.

When, on his return from meeting, the deacon did not find Eunice down stairs, he suspected part of the truth, and when Yolande told him that Aunt Eunice's door was locked, his suspicions were confirmed. He persuaded Yolande to take an afternoon nap, and while she slept he prayed. Little as Deacon Hopkins understood Eunice's state of mind, he felt that she needed help, and how could he help her more effectually than by prayer?

As hour after hour passed, and still no sound came from Eunice's room, the deacon grew alarmed. Eunice had seemed ill that morning; perhaps she was worse. Possibly, although that would be an unheard-of thing in Eunice's life, she had fainted. The deacon clambered up the stairs and called, "Eunice! Eunice!"

Eunice opened the door. The deacon, coming in, was startled by the look of her face. Nothing could make Eunice Hopkins

white, but to-night her face was an ashy gray and there were dark rings around her eyes.

"My poor daughter!" said the deacon, laying his hand upon her shoulder.

The Hopkinses were not demonstrative. That touch on the shoulder meant more than an embrace would mean in some families. To the surprise of both her father and herself, Eunice burst into tears:

"Oh, father, I hate him, and I can't help it!"

"Pray, Eunice, pray! That is the only way we can drive hatred out of the heart. When Benjamin went away there was a whole week that I could get no enjoyment out of religion. My heart was full of hatred. One day I read, 'You can't hate the man for whom you pray.' Said I, 'I'll try that;' and I kept a-praying until all the hatred went out of me. Now I mourn over James Grantley; I must see him repentant."

"But, father, can you bear the thought of his being saved when Benjamin is lost?"

"Because one soul dear to me has missed heaven, shall I wish another to miss it too? Don't say that Benjamin is lost. There are

so many things that make me hope for the best!" Then, seeing the look of sad incredulity in Eunice's face, the deacon shrank from submitting to her unbelief the hopes so dear to himself. "We must leave him in the arms of a loving Father, Eunice."

"We must leave him in the hands of a just God," she replied.

"More than just, Eunice—more than just. Remember that he loved us so that he sent his well-beloved Son to suffer and die, that we might live. That was mercy, not mere justice, Eunice. It is hard," continued the deacon after a pause—"harder than anybody but you and I can know—but we must trust God; we must say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Can you say that, Eunice?"

"I can."

"Let us try now."

They repeated the words—the deacon with heartfelt earnestness, Eunice with a sort of grim decision in her tones.

## CHAPTER VI.

"In judging of others a man laboreth in vain, often erreth and easily sinneth; but in judging and examining himself he always laboreth fruitfully."

SUNDAY at Dr. Grantley's was unlike other days, chiefly because the dinner was better. Mrs. Tibbits wore a fresher cap and a breastpin with somebody's hair in it; Helen was accustomed to sleep, to read and to take long, aimless walks.

Coming into the dining-room this morning a while after the late breakfast, Helen found Mrs. Tibbits dressed for going out.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"Well, I promised sister Sarah that I'd go over to meeting this morning. They are going to have a new minister at her church to-day, so I thought I'd go and see what he is like. I was brought up to attend Sunday services, but lately I've got sort of out of the way of all such things."

"I believe I'll go too," exclaimed Helen.

"Oh no, don't!" gasped the widow faintly. "That is, I mean the doctor would find it out, surely, and take on about it at a dreadful rate. He don't believe in such things."

"You can go alone, Mrs. Tibbits, and I will take all responsibility off of you by going upon my own account, though if we were to go together I don't think the doctor would accuse *you* of being the leader."

"But what makes you want to go at all?" asked the widow. "I presume it will be awfully hot in the church: I should think you'd rather take your usual stroll to the woods."

"I suppose I am actuated by the same lofty motive which moves you—curiosity. I want to see some of my fellow-creatures. You are good as far as you go, but one small woman don't go far in some cases."

With an uneasy sense of having set on foot an enterprise that might not redound to her comfort, Mrs. Tibbits departed. Helen brushed her hair, mended her gloves and put on her best attire, which was by no means so fine as that of the farmers' daughters in

the neighborhood. Then, with a dim idea that she might need a Bible, she searched for Mrs. Tibbits's, and with it in her hand started up the long, shaded hillside to the church. Helen was often self-absorbed, but seldom self-conscious; so the fact that she was going among strangers did not intimidate her. It was rather late when she reached the church, and as she stood waiting in the little entry the sexton saw her. Deacon Hopkins's pew was always open to strangers, and in it the sexton seated Helen. Her first feeling was of annoyance at finding herself seated next the deacon, but her interest in the service soon made her forgetful of all else. Justus Halsay had that morning no more attentive hearer than the unexpected occupant of the deacon's pew.

The sermon was over; the man who professed to speak as an ambassador from the almighty Creator of the universe had delivered his message; the people who professed to receive him as thus sent had heard—heard with eyes keenly observant of any violation of pulpit propriety. The Conesus Corners church was willing to pay for *man-*

ner; why should it not see whether the present candidate could furnish it? So some of the congregation observed how many times Mr. Halsay used his left hand, how many times his right; whether he spread his fingers "like bats' wings" or gave them a graceful curve; whether he, as did the last candidate, committed the shocking indecorum of putting his hands in his pantaloon pockets. Others, more intellectually inclined, noticed his pronunciation, his choice of words or the structure of his sentences.

Of course in all this attention to details the subject-matter must suffer some neglect, but even those whose consciences would not have allowed them thus to have listened to their own pastor justified themselves by thinking, "He is a candidate."

"How do you like the new minister?" asked Anna Dunlap of Bell Haton as the girls gathered in a group before Sunday-school began.

"I don't like him at all. He is too vehement. I like perfect repose, perfect repose, in the pulpit. Besides, I don't believe



he had any pocket handkerchief. He never *showed* one during the whole sermon, and, if you'll believe me, once I saw him wipe the perspiration from his upper lip with his fore finger. Shocking, was it not?"

Miss Bell was one of the few young ladies of Conesus Corners who had been away to boarding-school. In consequence of her year at Ellington she considered herself qualified to pronounce judgment upon any subject whatever.

"I hope they won't call him," she continued, "for he has a horrid profile. That young student from Princeton who preached two weeks ago had the most exquisite nose I ever saw. I'd come to church just to see his profile, it was so like that photograph of Apollo which used to hang in the seminary parlor. I do hope they will call him. But," she added with impatience, "they won't, for Judge Balcom did not like him. You know he stopped with the judge, and at dinner the judge put him through a theological examination. I may not get it very straight, for I don't profess to be a theologian. The question that settled the matter

was something like this: 'If a new-born babe should die, would it be saved by the atonement of Christ or because it was not a partaker in Adam's sin?' I don't know what the minister's opinion was, but, anyway, it did not suit the judge, who said the young man was tinctured with the error of Pelagius, whatever that may be. I heard him telling father about it last night. He said he could not reconcile it with his conscience to call him. I think it mean that Judge Balcom has found fault with the theology of every candidate we have had," continued Miss Bell, with the digression, "Did you see that Grantley girl out? What a looking bonnet she wore! She never goes anywhere, so what do you suppose started her out to-day? Wasn't it a good joke for the sexton to put her in the deacon's seat?"

"Why shouldn't he put her there? The deacon always offers his seat to strangers."

"Why, Anna Dunlap! have you lived all your life at Conesus Corners and don't know that Dr. Grantley hates Deacon Hopkins? I don't suppose that Grantley girl would

have sat there for anything if she had known where she was in time to act."

"She seems to be talking very pleasantly with him now," said Anna.

"Why, so she is! What does it mean? Who is that child that sat with the deacon this morning? Isn't she a perfect beauty?"

As the deacon and Helen approached the group the deacon paused.

"I am trying, Anna," he said, addressing Anna Dunlap, who was a special favorite of his, "to get Miss Grantley to stay to Sunday-school. Eunice is sick—one of her bilious turns—and Mr. Halsay will teach the class. I think he'll be a good teacher. I'd like to stay myself, but then you young folks don't want an old man like me 'round," added the deacon with a kindly smile.

"Do stay, Miss Grantley," said Anna cordially; "I am sure you would like it."

Helen hesitated. She had not thought of staying to the Sunday-school, but why should she not? She would see more people, and people were interesting. Besides, she would like to hear the minister talk, and see if the Sunday-school here was like the one she re-

membered at the asylum. So, after a little urging on Anna's part, she consented. Mrs. Tibbits, who was seated among the visitors in the back seat, was wholly overcome with amazement when Helen walked away with Anna Dunlap to her place in the class.

"Well, judge, how do you like Mr. Halsay?" asked Deacon Hopkins as the two walked homeward.

"H'm! a tolerable sort of a sermon—no originality, no particular power. *We* want a man that will take right hold of men and compel them to believe—a man that will preach the *doctrines*. This Halsay gives milk for babes; we want the strong meat of the gospel."

"But what are the babes meantime a-going to do?" asked the deacon, smiling. "It may be that I'm a babe in Christ myself—sometimes I am afraid I am nothing more—but that sermon did me good, the young man seemed so earnest. His prayers, too, were so good. When he asked the Lord to bless his sermon I felt sure he would. Then he didn't pray all over the universe, but asked for just what I wanted. I'd be satisfied to have him called."

"I don't know about that," replied the judge, taking a long side-step that he might crush an unfortunate caterpillar warming itself in the June sunshine. "Unless I am mistaken, he is inclined to Arianism. I have been reading a refutation of Price's sermons, and it strikes me that there is a great similarity between Mr. Halsay's views and those of that Socinian. It may be only a seeming similarity. You cannot always decide upon a man's theological views from one sermon. I shall listen closely to-night, and endeavor also to have some conversation with Mr. Halsay before he leaves us. Dr. Marcus, to whom I wrote, is a very sound man. I intimated to him in my letter that we who have authority in this matter did not propose to take to ourselves any teacher who would lead the people astray; I trusted he would send a man with whom no fault could be found. But how would you explain this expression, as used by Mr. Halsay? He said—"

But the deacon, who feared that any explanation might prove him guilty of some *ism*, interrupted the judge by turning to speak to a man just passing:

"Good-morning, Mr. Potter; glad to see you out. How's your family?"

"Pretty smart, thank'ee. Mother don't get out much now-a-days. We are beginning to feel our years. We have to pay for these 'ere 'crowns of glory,'" touching the straggling gray hair that fell over his coat-collar.

"You forget," said the judge sententiously, "that gray hair is a 'crown of glory' *only* when found in the way of righteousness."

The red deepened in the old man's cheeks, but he made no reply.

"There is a gospel-hardened sinner," commented the judge as Mr. Potter passed out of hearing. "He don't seem to have any feeling. I have talked to him a great many times, but it does no good. He is utterly given over to unbelief."

"Oh, I can't think so," expostulated the deacon. "He seemed quite tender when his little grandson died. He has such a good wife; I'm sure her prayers will be answered."

The judge shook his head doubtfully, but as they had reached his gate he made no other reply.

## CHAPTER VII.

“Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living.”

HELEN GRANTLEY was delighted with the Sunday-school. Justus Haysay was a keen observer, and during the opening exercises he studied carefully the class which he had been requested to teach. Helen was, he concluded, a visitor, for she seemed at once unfamiliar with the ways of the school. From the uncertain way in which she turned over the leaves of her Bible when the superintendent gave out a reference he judged that she was not familiar with the book. When he came to teach the lesson he gave the references in the four Gospels to the hesitating ones, those in the Old Testament and Epistles to those who had found readily the superintendent's verses. From the manner of reading he formed a sufficiently accurate opinion of the intellectual

ability of the reader, so that he knew of whom he could safely ask questions. Helen surprised both herself and the class by talking much and well. So skillfully had Mr. Halsay worked that when he made a practical, earnest application of the lesson to their daily lives he had the entire attention of his class. No one was giving half her mind to the application—the other half to the mortifying reflection that she had made a fool of herself.

“If you will wait a moment, Miss Grantley,” said Anna Dunlap after the school was dismissed, “I will go part way home with you.”

“You do not live in this direction, do you?” asked Helen, who thought she knew at least the names of all her neighbors.

“Oh no; we live the other side of the village, but I promised Laura (that’s my sister, who has gone away) that I would bring this book to Maria Wells.”

“Oh, that invalid girl?”

“Yes; do you know her?”

Helen shook her head, returning, “I heard Mrs. Tibbits say there was some one



near us who had not sat up for a number of years."

"Ten years," said Anna; "she fell and hurt her back when she was fifteen, and since then she has never sat up at all. That was ten years ago, for she is just Laura's age. She has to lie flat on her back; she can't even be propped up with pillows."

"How can she read, then?" asked Helen.

"Oh, she can't read herself; her mother reads to her. Sister Laura used to go often when she was at home."

"I should think she would want to die," said Helen, reflecting what such a life would mean to her.

"Oh, Maria is very cheerful. I don't see how she can be so, but she is. Here we are at the gate; won't you go in?"

Helen was out to study people. A girl who had lain on her back for ten years, and yet was cheerful, would be worth going a few extra steps to see; so she said,

"Yes."

In response to Anna's knock a pleasant voice called out clearly,

"Come in."

Anna opened the door and went in, but Helen paused a moment in astonishment on the threshold. She had not imagined that the small, unpainted house could be so beautiful within. Helen knew nothing of tastefully-arranged apartments. The little living-room of the Widow Wells was the first home-like room she had ever seen. Her scrutiny did not descend to details. If it had done so, she would have found that everything was very plain. The carpet was of rags so faded as to meet the modern requirement of being unnoticeable. The table and chairs were of painted wood, but the first had a dainty cover and the chairs bright cushions. Around the room were dozens of pretty trifles, such as Helen had never seen. But the great attraction was the plants and the flowers which everywhere appeared. On brackets, filling the window-seats, festooning the curtains, were ferns, vines and flowers.

"This is Miss Grantley," said Anna, breaking into Helen's unconscious survey of the apartment.

Helen turned and saw lying on a low couch by the window a girl whom at first

glance she thought beautiful. Yet aside from an exquisite complexion and soft brown eyes Maria Wells could lay no claims to even prettiness. She did not have the invalid look Helen expected. Her cheeks were full, her face was cheerful.

"Miss Grantley and I have been neighbors for some time, but I have never seen her before; I couldn't be neighborly, and she hasn't been so," she added with a smile.

"Oh, Maria, where did you get these lovely lilies-of-the-valley? Ours have been gone this long time," broke out Anna, taking up a vase of lilies which sat on a stand beside the couch.

"Mother has a bed on the north side of the house, where the snow lingers late into the spring. They are so backward that they do not blossom until June. So I have the dear white bells for over a month," touching them caressingly with her delicate fingers.

"No, I can't stay," said Anna as Maria motioned her toward a seat; "I came to bring you that book Laura promised you."

"Oh, thank you." Then a cloud came over the bright face: "I don't know whether

I had better keep it or not, for mother's eyes are so bad that she cannot read to me, and I could not think of reading it myself."

"Can you read at all?" asked Anna.

"Only in this fashion now-a-days," replied Maria, taking up a large-print Testament which lay beside the lilies. She straightened herself upon her back, rested her elbows upon the bed and held the book up above her eyes.

"Of course I can read but a moment or two that way. All I do is to read a verse of the Bible; then I repeat it over until I learn it. I have committed all the Gospel of John; now I am learning Romans, but I find it harder than John. It's a great comfort to me to do this, but I couldn't think of attempting a story. Once I could read with more ease."

"Oh dear! I wish I could read it to you, but the next two weeks I shall be so busy. We are preparing for the anniversary at school, and between getting ready for examination and preparing the paper which I am to edit, I don't have a moment's leisure."

"If you are perfectly willing to leave the

book for a longer time than usual, you may. Perhaps mother's eyes will get better, or somebody may come to read to me. You know the old adage about the lame and the lazy. They are always provided for; and if the lame happen to be blind as well, the proverb may still hold good," said Maria with a bright smile.

"Why, it's almost two o'clock!" exclaimed Anna, glancing at the clock on the bureau; "I shall lose my dinner."

"Come and see me when you can; I shall expect a large piece of your time during vacation.—I hope, Miss Grantley, that you too will be neighborly, now you have taken the first step. You will have to come soon and return this call. That is the way my friends do.—Good-bye. I thank you both for coming to-day."

"So you go to school?" said Helen as the two girls stood for a moment at the gate before separating to take their different ways homeward.

"Yes. You don't?"

"No; I wish I did."

"Why don't you?" came to Anna's lips,

but she thought in time to change it into,  
"I suppose you study at home?"

"I don't study at all."

"Don't you have time?"

"'Time'?" repeated Helen bitterly; "I have more time than I know what to do with."

"Then why didn't you offer to read that book to Maria?"

"I never thought that I could," replied Helen truthfully.

"But you will, now that you think of it? Please do."

Helen hesitated. "Maybe I will," she said at last.

"When mother says 'maybe,' I know that I have gained my point; I hope it is so with you. I am going to run back and tell Maria that you will read the book to her. That will give her something pleasant to think of," said Anna, opening the gate.

"No, don't," cried Helen in dismay.

"Why not?"

"Maybe I cannot—shall not," she answered.

"Oh yes, you can and will. Please let

me tell Maria. I may, may I not?" persisted Anna, looking coaxingly into Helen's face.

It was a new and rather pleasant experience for Helen to have any one coax her:

"Well, yes. I suppose I can do it."

Anna waited for no more, but bounded up the walk.

"Maria is perfectly delighted," she cried, coming back, her own face radiant. "She says, if you will please, come to-morrow at four o'clock, if that time is perfectly convenient for you."

"I can come one time as well as another," replied Helen.

"I am so glad that you came to church to-day when I had this book to bring to Maria! It is what Deacon Hopkins would call providential. I am so happy to have found a friend for Maria—a friend, too, who has leisure to read to her! I declare it will make me happy all the week."

"A friend"! Helen thought the word over as she walked homeward. She had often wished for a friend, but she had thought little about being one. Perhaps

she could be a friend to Maria, and have Maria for her friend. Would she like to have it turn out so? Helen was not quite certain. She was thinking it over when she reached the gate.

Dr. Grantley sat smoking on the porch.

"Where have you been?" he asked sternly as Helen came up the walk.

Dr. Grantley did not ask for information. He had extracted from Mrs. Tibbits, during dinner, a full account of the morning's events, even to the sitting in the deacon's pew and the remaining to Sunday-school. Mrs. Tibbits had fully intended to say nothing about the matter. She liked Helen better than she liked the doctor, and she knew, moreover, that on this occasion she herself would come in for a share of the blame. But, unfortunately for her intended secrecy, Mrs. Tibbits was one of those persons whom the consciousness of having anything to conceal makes unusually communicative, and Dr. Grantley was not a questioner easy to evade.

"To church," replied Helen, coming up the steps.



"What did you go there for?"

"For the same reason that other people do, I suppose."

"That is a lie. Other people go from a sense of duty, to see their friends or to show their new clothes; you have no sense of duty, no friends, no new clothes. Now look here, young lady," he added, after waiting an instant for a reply from Helen: "I don't care anything about your going to church—you'll get tired of it soon enough—but I am not going to have you sitting in the pew of that old hypocrite next door. What did you mean by sitting there to-day?"

"Not being accustomed to church-going," said Helen coolly, "I did not know that it was necessary to tell the sexton what seats you would *not* sit in."

"H'm!" muttered the doctor. "Well, you understand now. You are not to have anything to do or to say with that old hypocrite or with any of his family."

Helen went into the house without answering.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"He is truly learned that doeth the will of God and forsaketh his own will. He is truly great who hath great love."

"GRACIOUS me!" exclaimed Mrs. Tibbits as Helen came into the kitchen after supper dressed to go out. "Where are you going now?"

"To the meeting."

"To meeting? to-night? alone? You mustn't think of it. The doctor was awfully vexed about your going this morning. You must not go to-night."

Helen composedly fastened her gloves.

"Please don't go," cried the widow, changing her unaccustomed tone of command to one of entreaty. "I shall not dare look at the doctor if he comes home while you are gone. He'll be sure to lay the blame on me. Don't go, Helen, that's a good girl," pleaded Mrs. Tibbits, placing herself in the doorway.

Helen brushed her aside as if she had been a fly.

"I am going to meeting, Mrs. Tibbits, and you had better stop making yourself ridiculous."

"Oh dear! what shall I do?" moaned Mrs. Tibbits as Helen went slowly down the walk. "I might go with her, but that would only make him more provoked; he'd say I started it. It was only yesterday I heard him tell her not to be out after dark; and Sunday night is the worst of all. What shall I do? There is Zebadiah Potter; I'll just ask him to look after her.—Mr. Potter! Mr. Potter!" she called.

Mr. Potter stopped, and before Helen could protest she was put under his care.

"Well," said Mrs. Tibbits, coming back to the house, "I've done the best I could, but I suppose he will not think so."

Mrs. Tibbits was not disappointed in her expectation of a scolding. Dr. Grantley came in from a long ride very tired and crosser than usual. He found fault with the supper which Mrs. Tibbits had provided; he asked if she had not made a mistake and put

chips on the bread-plate and emptied her dish-water into the teapot.

"There's nothing fit to eat on this table; make me some lemonade."

"There are no lemons in the house."

"No lemons in the house! How many times have I got to say that I want lemons in the house every day during the summer? Well, I must have some: that's all there is about that. Helen can go down to Jenkins's and get some."

"It's Sunday; the grocery will not be open."

"Well, then, she can go to the house; Jenkins will get some for her. Where is she?"

"She ain't here."

"If she was here I shouldn't be asking you about her. Go tell her to get ready."

"She ain't in the house."

"I presume not; she never is when she is wanted. Where is she?"

"Gone to meeting," gasped the widow faintly.

"Meeting?"

"Yes."

The doctor swore loudly. He was often profane when he was angry, but Mrs. Tibbits was always terrified.

The sight of her to-night crying behind her pocket handkerchief enraged the doctor more.

"Fool!" he muttered, "what did you let her go for? Didn't you hear me tell her last night not to be out after dark?"

"I couldn't help it," sobbed Mrs. Tibbits. "I tried to reason with her; then I stood in the door and told her not to think of going, but she pushed me out of her way and walked off. I saw Zebadiah Potter going along, and I asked him to see to her. It was all I could do, and even that made her angry."

"I don't doubt, Mrs. Tibbits, that you put her up to going. When I hired you the principal recommendation you had was the absence of any pretence to piety. Now let me tell you: I am not going to have any sneaking hypocrites in my house. If you propose to try piety, you can pack your baggage and leave."

The widow began a tearful protest against the accusation of "piety," but the doctor,

without waiting to hear her, walked into the library, slamming the door behind him.

Helen found Mr. Potter a very unobtrusive companion. He said little on the way to church, and on their return his only remark, aside from directions how to avoid stones and mud, was the abrupt question,

“Are you a Christian?”

At first Helen said “Yes,” then “No,” then “I don’t know”—not because she was in any doubt as to her state, but because she did not know what a Christian was. Mr. Potter made no comment on Helen’s confused answer, and neither of them spoke again on the way home.

Mr. Zebadiah Potter—or, as he was generally called, Uncle Zeb—was a hard-working, plain-spoken farmer about seventy years old. Some one has said that to old men who are not lovely enough for the endearing title of “father” that of “uncle” is given. In some such manner Uncle Zeb must have won his uncleship. To be honorable in his dealings was his religion; for anything beyond he seemed to have no desire. In every revival with which the Conesus Corners church was

blessed Uncle Zeb was the subject of many prayers and the object of some ill-judged efforts. So many such seasons had passed, however, without any apparent change in Uncle Zeb's position that even the most sanguine began to lose hope; but Mrs. Potter's faith never faltered. Some time, it might be at the eleventh hour, she believed Zebadiah would be converted. She had prayed for him for years, and "praying breath was never spent in vain."

On this particular Sunday Mr. Potter came home at noon more quiet than usual.

"If you don't go to meeting for nothing but to find fault, you'd better stay at home," was his only comment on his son James's would-be smart dissection of the sermon.

James was so astonished by this attack from his usual ally that he subsided into silence.

After dinner Uncle Zeb went out to feed the cattle. He was gone so long that Mrs. Potter grew uneasy. Possibly she could not herself have told why she did not send James instead of going herself to look for him, nor why she opened the barn-door so

softly. At first she could see no one, but at last she saw, high up on the haymow, close to the little cobwebbed window, her husband reading. Mrs. Potter's heart beat quickly. As noiselessly as she had entered she slipped out of the barn and hurried to the house. The family Bible was gone.

The parlor bedroom was Mrs. Potter's "Peniel," whither she retired and prayed for the work of God's Spirit on her husband's heart until her evening duties called her away. Even then, as she went about the house, her heart prayed on.

James had another surprise that night when his father announced his intention of going to the evening meeting.

"I declare!" he muttered as he watched his father's form disappear in the direction of the Corners; "I believe father's getting pious. Once a day generally does for him."

That evening, as Mrs. Potter was sitting alone, James having gone to see some of the farmers' daughters of the neighborhood, she heard a quick step coming up the path from the gate. The door was thrown suddenly open and her husband entered.



"Mother, pray for me! pray quick!" he cried.

Mrs. Potter needed no second invitation. She cried mightily unto the Lord, and prevailed.

The next morning, as James started from the breakfast-table to go about his work, his father stopped him:

"Wait a bit, James; I have something to say to you. I've always meant to be an honest man, but I hain't been a religious one. Not that I hain't thought, for I have; but I might have thought and still gone down to my grave unprepared. Yesterday, when that minister was a-preaching, it came to me all of a sudden how I looked in the sight of God. I was dreadfully cut up. I haven't no gift for talking; I can't tell what I went through yesterday; but I ain't the man I was. God helping me, I'm going to live for him. I've been talking with mother, and she thinks, and so do I, that we ought to have family prayers. So, if you'll set down a while, I'll read a chapter and try to pray."

The astonished James seated himself while

his father read and offered a broken but earnest prayer.

Justus Halsay's prayer that he might help some soul was answered.

When Helen reached home that same Sunday night Mrs. Tibbits tiptoed up to her room:

"Oh, Helen! the doctor was dreadfully enraged about your going to meeting to-night. I didn't mean to tell him where you were, but I had to do it. He wanted you to go to the Corners for some lemons."

"I shouldn't have gone had I been here."

"You would have had to go. He came in as cross as a bear. He scolded at everything there was on the table to eat—"

"No unusual occurrence," remarked Helen, putting away her bonnet. "I don't see that it's worth while to take up my time telling me of it."

"He asked me three times where you were, and when I had to tell him he swore at me. It makes my hair stand straight up to hear him swear so. I couldn't help crying, and then he called me a fool."

"In which he told the truth," commented

Helen *sotto voce*, adding aloud, "I don't care a straw what he said. I am very tired, and I want to go to bed."

"Well, I'm afraid you'll catch it to-morrow."

"I can stand it if I do," said Helen, opening the door for Mrs. Tibbits's departure.

"How did you like Uncle Zeb?" asked the irrepressible widow, pausing outside the door.

"I liked him; he knew enough to be still when no one wanted him to talk."

With which broad hint Helen closed the door, leaving Mrs. Tibbits to grope her way down stairs in the dark, meditating meanwhile on the relative disagreeableness of the two Grantleys.

Notwithstanding her assurance to Mrs. Tibbits that she was sleepy, Helen did not go to bed. She blew out her candle and seated herself by the window. It had been such a strange day! She felt as if she were another Helen Grantley from the one who had gone out of that room in the morning—not better nor worse, but different. It was as if one who had lived all his life in a val-

ley should climb a mountain and look out upon the world lying around him. Had she been asleep all her life before? These people whom she had met to-day had lived near her all these years, yet she had neither known of nor cared for them. Would Anna Dunlap be the friend she wanted? What would come of her readings to Maria? Confused with these thoughts came the question Uncle Zeb had asked her. Which had been the right answer? All people who believed in Christ were Christians. She believed in him—at least she supposed she did, although she had never thought much about the matter; but surely she was not a heathen. As she was about to climb into the high, old-fashioned bedstead she was startled by the mental suggestion, “Why don’t you pray?”

Pray! why should she?

The answer came, “This has been a pleasant day for you; can’t you thank God for it?”

Half ashamed, Helen knelt and said,  
“O God, I thank thee for this day.”

## CHAPTER IX.

"Blessed indeed are those ears which listen not after the voice which is sounding without, but for the truth teaching within."

IT was the practice of the Conesus Corners church to hold a congregational meeting on the Monday following the Sunday on which any candidate had occupied the pulpit. At these meetings the eligibility of the candidate to fill the office of pastor was freely discussed, and the sentiment of the church taken as a preliminary to the more formal meeting to decide to call or not to call a pastor. These meetings were always largely attended. Church-members who, on account of fatigue, overworked horses, the heat of summer or the cold of winter, could never be present at the weekly prayer-meeting, were more fortunate on the day of this meeting. To be sure, these meetings were always held in the daytime, making necessary the

leaving of business and the taking of horses from work, but for great objects small sacrifices must be made. Two o'clock in the afternoon following the Rev. Justus Halsay's candidature found every man who could lay any claim to belonging to the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Conesus Corners gathered in the little meeting-house. That the women were not present argued no indifference on their part, but they were not given a voice in these business-meetings.

On this occasion the meeting followed its usual order, Judge Balcom being in the chair to see that all was conducted according to parliamentary rules. Each candidate had satisfied a few admirers that he, and he only, was the pastor whom the Conesus Corners church required, and the spokesman of each of these parties urged that his man be heard again. Others had new candidates to suggest. This latter proposition brought Deacon Hopkins to his feet:

"Don't let's have *another one*! This church has not got the spirituality to stand it. We've had seven now, and every one makes matters worse. Says Sister Robinson

to me yesterday, 'I've been a-praying for a revival this winter, but if we don't stop having candidates I'll have to stop praying, for I hain't got the faith. I'm afeerd the church is getting where the Lord can't bless us.' I tell you, brethren, when it has got so that one member of the church won't speak to another because he has said something against *his* candidate,—I tell you we are in no condition for the Lord to bless us. - This candidating is breaking the church up into little sets. Don't let's have another one. What's the matter with Mr. Halsay? I move that we call him."

"I move an informal ballot for all the candidates," called a party-man.

After some discussion a ballot was taken, giving a large majority for Mr. Halsay.

"I move that we express our views—that a regular meeting be held and a call extended to the Rev. Justus Halsay to become the pastor of this church."

"I second the motion."

The judge called for "remarks," which were growing animated, when Uncle Zebadiah Potter arose :

“ You all know I ain’t no hand to speechify. I always come to these meetings, but I never say nothing, because I never had nothing to say. To-day I’ve got somethin’, but ’tain’t nowise certain I can say it. It seems to me I have an argument for Mr. Halsay to be called. I don’t know as I can git it out. I never had such a feller-feeling for dumb critters as I have this afternoon. You all know what I’ve been. I’ve meant to be an honorable man in my dealings, but I hain’t taken no stock in religion. I’ve been to meeting off and on for a good many years, but it never seemed to do me no good—leastwise, it never come to anything. I s’pose it’s been a kind o’ working in me. There’s my wife Mary; if ever there was a saint on airth, it’s her. Many’s the time she’s talked and prayed with me. Well, I came up to meeting yesterday to hear the new preacher. I remember thinking he didn’t look nigh so smart as some of the others, and when he took his text, ‘The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,’ I began to reckon up how many sermons I had heerd on that ’ere text. But before he’d



got done it seemed to me as if I stood all alone and there wasn't nothing nowhere but them 'ere eyes of God. It seemed to me I saw myself just as I looked in the sight of God. I couldn't get away from it. I went home from meeting, and I took a Bible and I went out to the barn, and climbed up on the haymow to read. But the more I read the worse I felt. I tried to pray, but I couldn't do it. I came to meeting in the evening, and he preached about the love of Christ. It seemed to me as if the Lord Jesus stood right afore me. I saw the blood-drops which the thorns had made on his forehead, and he held out his hands all pierced with the nails, and he said, 'I have suffered all this for you. Will you not love me?' And I *couldn't* love him; my heart was like a millstone. It seemed to me I'd die before I got home. When I got to the gate I fairly run up to the house; I opened the door, and mother sat there alone. Says I, '*Mother, pray for me—pray quick!*' I didn't need to ask her more than once. Afore I could get the door shut she was on her knees; and I tell you she prayed! She got right hold of

the Lord, and she never let go until it seemed as if this 'ere hard heart of mine was all melted down. I just cried out, '*My Lord and my God!*'" Here Uncle Zeb choked.

"Bless the Lord!" cried the deacon, "bless the Lord! Let us give thanks to him for his great goodness. Amen."

"While we rejoice," began Judge Balcom so soon as the "Amen" had fallen from the deacon's lips, "to know that the Lord in his great mercy has awakened one of our fellow-citizens to a realizing sense of his lost condition, and taken his feet out of the miry clay, we must not forget that the purpose for which we are gathered together is not to hear religious experiences nor to give way to our emotions," with a reproving glance at the offending deacon, "but to decide whether we desire to extend a call to the Rev. Justus Halsay to become the pastor of this people."

"'Seems to me," said the irrepressible deacon, springing to his feet, "that the Lord has settled that question for us. I hain't been clear in my mind about this candidating. It never seemed the right thing. It's mostly show-sermons that candidates preach—least-

wise, sermons to the head more than to the heart. I hain't got nothing to say against the candidates we've had—some of them have fed me—but I haven't heard of the Lord's blessing those sermons to the conversion of souls. Here's one brother for whom we have prayed, and with whom we have labored for years, and this man has come and brought the truth right home to him as we couldn't. It seems to me just as if the Lord had set his seal on him, saying, 'This is the man I have chosen.'"

Many of the members were in sympathy with Deacon Hopkins, and so, after some further discussion, it was decided to hold a meeting to call the Rev. Justus Halsay to the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church at Conesus Corners. In due time the meeting was summoned, a neighboring pastor presiding, and a formal call was extended to Mr. Halsay with scarce a dissenting vote.

Uncle Zeb was not born into the kingdom dumb. Everywhere he went he told what a Saviour he had found. The conversion of a man so well known naturally made

much impression in a quiet country village, so it happened that the numbers began to increase at the weekly prayer-meeting. Sister Robinson redoubled her prayers; Deacon Hopkins wrote, with untold difficulty, a letter to Mr. Halsay urging him to come to the church immediately. The pastor-elect was no less anxious to enter upon his work than were his people to have him. There was no need of delay, so the third Sunday found him settled as pastor.

The advent of a new minister, young and thoroughly in earnest, increased the interest, and Conesus Corners enjoyed the unusual experience of a revival in midsummer.

## CHAPTER X.

"The time will come when the Master of masters shall appear, Christ the Lord of angels, to hear the lessons of all; that is, to examine the consciences of every one."

ONE day, a few weeks after Mr. Halsay's settlement at Conesus Corners, he wished to consult with Deacon Hopkins in regard to some church matter, so he walked out to the farm-house. Mr. Halsay had fallen into the way of going to the deacon with all the vexatious questions which had arisen thus far in his pastoral life at the Corners.

"He's down in the west wood-lot," replied Eunice in answer to Mr. Halsay's inquiry for her father. "Walk in, and I'll blow the horn for him."

"Oh no; I'll go right out where he is."

"Well, you go down the lane until you come to the woods. You will hear the chopping; follow the sound, and you will have no trouble in finding him."

"Thank you, Miss Hopkins; I shall enjoy the walk through the woods," said Mr. Halsay, starting down the grassy lane.

When he reached the woods he could hear no sound save the "noisy silence" of Nature.

"I will go into the woods," he said to himself, "and enjoy their beauty until the chopping begins again."

He wandered under the trees, gathering now and then a flower and watching the ceaseless play of light and shade over the little path along which he was walking. At length he heard the sound of running water.

"There is a brook somewhere here," he exclaimed; "I must find it."

As he walked the ripple of the water became clearer and clearer. Then, mingled with its music, he heard a voice. He stopped to listen.

"And he gathers the prayers as he stands,  
And they change into flowers in his hands.  
Into garlands of purple and red;  
And beneath the great arch of the portal,  
Through the gates of the city immortal,  
Is wafted the fragrance they shed."

The voice seemed half familiar, but who could be reading Longfellow in Deacon Hopkins's woods? Rapidly approaching, he saw sitting on the trunk of a fallen tree which overhung the water a young girl with a book in her hand. The face was bent so low that at first he did not recognize her, but the rustling he made in the dead leaves aroused her, and she turned her face full upon him. Helen had of late been a regular attendant at the Sabbath-school, where her thoughtful ignorance had attracted his attention.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Helen; you have a lovely place in which to read."

"I like it," replied Helen, as composedly as though meeting the minister in the woods were an every-day occurrence. "These are Deacon Hopkins's woods, but the brook don't run through Dr. Grantley's, so I come here. I like to hear the sound of the water."

"This reminds me," said Mr. Halsay, throwing himself down upon the leaf-covered ground, "of a place in my uncle's woods; I used to spend my vacations with him. There was just such a fallen tree as

the one you are sitting on. I used to take my books and go there to read. Do you like poetry?"

"I like Longfellow."

"Your answer is wiser than my question," said Mr. Halsay, smiling. "'Do you like poetry?' is rather indefinite. Do you remember Longfellow's 'Arsenal at Springfield'?"

"I never read it."

"If you will give me the book I will read it to you."

Helen handed him the book. Mr. Halsay was a fine reader. Helen, with a natural though uncultivated love for poetry, was delighted.

"Oh, how beautiful!" she cried, while her eager face, her clasped hands, gave an unconscious tribute more flattering to the reader than any spoken words. "Won't you please read some more?"

Mr. Halsay read several poems; then, as the pages of the book opened to "Sandalphon," he read that.

"Do you give any flowers of prayer to Sandalphon, Miss Helen?"



Helen shook her head.

"Why not?"

"I don't know."

"Have you nothing to thank God for—nothing to ask of him?"

"No, sir—at least not often. I did thank him a few weeks ago."

"May I ask what you thanked him for then?"

"Yes, sir. It was the first Sunday I went to church. I saw so many people—I can't tell exactly what I mean, but everything seemed different when I came home."

"Was that the first Sunday I preached here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had you never been to church before?"

"Never since I came here. When I was at the asylum I always went, but I don't remember much about it, except that I was always sleepy."

"I hope I do not have that effect upon you?" laughed Mr. Halsay.

"No," said Helen gravely, "I don't feel sleepy. I hear all you say, but I don't understand you."

"Is that my fault or yours?"

"I don't know; I don't understand anything lately. I don't know anything, and I never shall. I wish I were dead!"

Mr. Halsay was astounded by this outburst, but he was wise enough not to say so. He only asked quietly,

"Do you think dying would help matters?"

"No," replied Helen, doggedly, "I suppose not, if that sermon you preached last Sunday, on 'after death the judgment,' is true. I don't want to live, I don't want to die."

Helen had come out into the woods that morning in the vain hope of escaping the thoughts which troubled her. Her dissatisfaction had reached a point where it must find expression. A vague hope that Mr. Halsay could help her had betrayed her into a confidence at which she afterward wondered.

She could not have been more fortunate in her listener. Mr. Halsay had a rare gift of sympathy. All who came to him with trouble went away feeling that the trouble

was his as well as theirs. For the time being he went out of himself into their experience.

"My poor child!" he said when a few skillful questions had revealed to him the cause of Helen's unhappiness. "Don't you know what you need?"

"Everything."

"No—one thing."

"What is it?"

"The love of Christ in your heart. I have all you say that you want—education, the opportunity for doing something in the world—yet were I to wake up to-morrow morning with Christ gone out of my life I should feel as you feel to-day: I should fear both death and life. With Christ I fear nothing; life is a continual pleasure. I wake up in the morning with the thought, 'Another day in which I can work for the Saviour who has done so much for me.' I lie down at night in the consciousness of his love. Don't you want this same Christ to come into your heart and say to all its unrest, as he said to the raging waves of the sea, 'Peace, be still'?"

"He will not come."

"Have you ever asked him?"

"No, sir."

"Will you?"

"I don't know how."

"Are you willing to promise me that you will kneel down every night and morning and ask the Lord Jesus to come into your heart and to dwell there?"

"I do not believe that Christ could make *my* life pleasant."

"Perhaps not as it is, but if your heart were filled with his love you would find that some of your troubles could be removed and others made endurable. You can never understand until you know it by experience how much lighter a trouble becomes when we carry it to our Father in prayer. Here is this matter of school. Take it to God; ask him to influence Dr. Grantley to let you go."

"God influence Dr. Grantley! He couldn't; Dr. Grantley has nothing to do with God."

"It is possible that God may have more to do with him than he with God. Pray and wait. Ask your heavenly Father every

day that if it be his will you may go to school ; then try to believe that if it is best God will so arrange matters that you can go."

"I am almost discouraged about going to school," said Helen wearily, "since I talked with Anna Dunlap, she knows so much more than I do. I shall be put clear down with the little children. I don't know anything about school-books."

"While we are waiting for the answer which we trust God will send, you must be getting ready ; you must study by yourself."

"I don't know how ; I tried last winter, but I kept coming to things I didn't understand, so I became discouraged."

"It may be that I can help you over some of the hard places."

Helen's eyes sparkled with delight, but she did not speak.

"I could not give much time to you, but perhaps two hours a week would give you all the assistance needed. I will call at your house and see what books you have."

Helen's face fell.

"It will never do," she said hesitatingly, "for you to come there. Dr. Grantley hates ministers. Mr. Robertson called once. Dr. Grantley was away, but he told Mrs. Tibbits that if he had been at home he would have turned him out of the house."

"Then he would be unwilling to have me direct your studies?"

"He would be unwilling to have anybody do anything to help me," replied Helen bitterly.

"I don't know how we can manage about the lessons under these circumstances," said Mr. Halsay, musing.

"Couldn't I bring my books here to the woods or somewhere where you could come?" asked Helen eagerly.

Mr. Halsay looked into the face turned so anxiously toward his, and left unuttered the indignant refusal that trembled on his lips. He only said,

"That would be quite impossible, Miss Helen. I can do nothing underhanded;" adding, as he saw a look of disappointment stealing into Helen's face, "Do not be discouraged; I will try to arrange matters."

"But I am forgetting the object of my walk," said Mr. Halsay, rising. "Can you tell me where Deacon Hopkins's west wood-lot is? I called at the house, and Miss Eunice said that her father was chopping in the west wood-lot. I was looking for him when I discovered you."

"I can show you where he is," said Helen. They walked along in silence.

"There," said Helen, pointing to a little opening through which the figures of the men could be seen.

"Well, Miss Helen, are you going to give me the promise I asked of you a few moments ago?"

Helen hesitated.

"Yes," she said at length; "I promise to ask."

"Every night and every morning?"

"Every night and every morning."

"Thank you. I will not forget the lessons. You may be sure that I will try to find some way to help you."

## CHAPTER XI.

"A peaceable man doth more good than he that is well learned. A passionate man draweth even good into evil, and easily believeth the worst."

"I WISH that girl would come to our evening meetings," said Deacon Hopkins as Mr. Potter and he were walking together to church and saw Helen sitting on the porch. "Mr. Halsay thinks she has considerable feeling. If she could come to meeting, maybe she'd find the light."

"Why don't she come?"

"The doctor won't let her be out evenings alone, and there ain't any one to come with her. Eunice and I would be very glad to take her with us, but there ain't no use to think of that, so long as the doctor feels as he does. He has forbidden her to speak to us."

"I wonder I haven't thought of that girl. She went down to meeting with me the night I was converted. I remember I asked her



if she was a Christian, kind o' hoping that she could help me. First she said 'Yes,' then 'No,' then she 'didn't know.' I concluded that she didn't know nothing about it, so I didn't say no more to her. I haven't thought of her since."

"Maybe if you were to ask the doctor he'd let her go with you again."

"Maybe. Can't do any harm to try."

"Have you ever talked to Dr. Grantley since you've found the Lord?"

"No, I haven't. I've thought about it a good deal, but I haven't done it."

"I wish you would. I don't suppose he ever has anything said to him; folks are almost all afraid of him."

"I'm not afeerd of *him*, but I'll tell you just what I am afeerd of. The doctor is one of your larned men, and I hain't had no education at all; it is as much as I can do to read my Bible. Every time I think about saying anything to the doctor, something says, 'You don't know nothing. If you go you'll only disgrace your Master and make everything worse than it is now, so you'd better keep still.'"

"That's the devil," commented Deacon Hopkins briefly.

"Maybe, maybe. I'd just as soon go if I thought it would be best. I do wish I had a leetle more edication."

"Perhaps that isn't what's needed. I was talking to Mr. Halsay last night about speaking in meeting. Judge Balcom said something about speaking to edification and bringing 'beaten oil into the sanctuary.' I knew he meant *me*, from the way he said it; so I spoke to him about it. He said I didn't use good grammar, and he tried to tell me what I ought to say. Law me! I couldn't remember what he told me ten minutes. It kind o' troubled me, so I didn't say nothing in meeting last night. Mr. Halsay asked why, so I told him all about it. He said it wasn't grammar we wanted; grammar wouldn't convert a man. It was the love of Christ in the heart that we needed, and you've got that, Brother Potter."

"I orter have. If there's a man in this univarse that orter love the Lord Jesus Christ, that man's me. Maybe I could say a word to the doctor. I guess he kind o'

likes me; he always treats me civil-like. I'll think of it."

The next afternoon Uncle Zeb, having thought and prayed over the matter, walked into Dr. Grantley's office. Dr. Grantley, who promised himself some amusement from Uncle Zeb's conversation, received him cordially:

"Take a seat, Uncle Zebadiah. This is a warm day."

"A regular scorcher," replied Uncle Zeb, wiping his face with his red bandanna.

After the weather had been fully discussed, Mr. Potter, who had determined to be "wise as a serpent," tried to give the conversation a religious turn. Strategy was not in Uncle Zeb's line; this he soon discovered, and, abandoning it, he went straight to the point:

"I've been a-thinking about Miss Helen that lives at your house. She went to meeting with me one night. I ain't seen her out since."

"I told her she could not go; I am not going to have her running about at night."

"Wa'll, I suppose you are right there;

gals ain't what they used to be. When I was young and folks had a boy, all the old women in the village began to croak that boys was a great responsibility; but when it was a gal everybody took it for granted that it would come out all right. Now-a-days gals *air* about as risky as boys. Any objections to her going with me if I'll see her home?"

"I see no *use* in her going. I don't want any pious sneaks about my house."

"But you hain't got no objection to her becoming a good Christian?"

"Nonsense! These Christians are all alike; they are either fools or hypocrites, or both."

"In which class do you put me?"

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Potter; I have not been accustomed to think of you as belonging to that set."

"But I do belong there now, so what air you going to do with me?"

"You are excited now; you will get over it."

"Excited? He-haw! he-haw!" laughed Uncle Zeb. "I look like it, don't I? I'm

one of your narvous, excitable critters! Now, Dr. Grantley, I didn't think that of you."

"Well," laughed the doctor, who in the past had had some signal proofs of Uncle Zeb's steady nerves, "I must account for you on some other hypothesis."

"And when your 'pothesis don't meet the facts, you twist the facts to meet the 'pothesis. Call that fair, doctor?"

"Well, you'll get over it, Uncle Zeb. You have too much sense to be fooled long. I only wonder that they ever caught you."

"No, sir; I ain't going to get over it; I ain't going to have none of your chicken-pox religion, all over in a few weeks. I am going to have the real old-fashioned consumption kind, that sticks to a body till they die."

"You are sound in considering it a disease; I could make its diagnosis. It is a contagious disease too. The fact of the matter is, Uncle Zeb, it's *all* excitement."

"Excitement is a good thing sometimes."

"I am not so sure about that."

"Ain't you? I was quoting your own

words. When they got the smallpox at Warrenton last year, and some of the folks were a-scolding about the excitement at the Corners, you said at a public meeting that excitement was a good thing sometimes; you didn't care how excited folks got if it led them to take precautionary measures. That's all the excitement we Christians want. Any objections to my asking you a few questions about what *you* believe?"

"None at all," replied the doctor, lighting another cigar.

"Wa'll, when we die what becomes of us?"

"There is no 'become.' When we die, that is the end."

"Just like a brute beast?"

"Exactly."

"Ain't got no souls?"

"The soul is the life; when the life goes, that is the end."

"There ain't nothing very comforting in that. 'Twouldn't be much of a support in trouble."

"I think it would. When life becomes to be more dreaded than death, a snap of the pistol, a dose of laudanum, and all is over."

"Be you sartin about it's being all over?"

"No one can be certain about that concerning which he has neither his own experience nor the testimony of others. The thing commends itself to my reason; that is the most that I can say for it."

"That's your belief; now for mine. I am a good sight sartin about mine than you are about yours, because I think I've got the mind of the Lord for it. You believe in the Lord?"

"I believe in a God."

"Wa'll, I believe that in every human body there is a soul that can't die, and that for every soul that loves the Lord Jesus Christ there's an eternity of joy that ain't in the power of my tongue to describe, and for every soul that rejects him there's a hell whose torments are just as much beyond my power to describe. Now, suppose that you are right and I wrong, I am just as well off as you, because death is the end of both of us. Now, suppose I am *right*—you haven't no objection, just for argument's sake?"

"None at all."

"Wa'll, how is it with us then? I, if I am faithful to the end, shall have before me an eternity of happiness, and you—"

"Will be burning in that hell with which your preachers are so fond of threatening people," interrupted Dr. Grantley, with an angry flash in his eye.

"I ain't going to press the matter, because you won't stand it, doctor, but I jist want to return you a bit of your own advice. When James wanted to go over to Warrenton before he'd been vaccinated, you said it wasn't worth while to run any risk in matters of importance. Dr. Grantley, ain't you running an awful risk in this matter of religion?"

Dr. Grantley kicked the spittoon around to the other side of his chair, but made no reply.

"There's one of your converts going by," he said at length, breaking a silence that was becoming unpleasant. "Last night he lay dead drunk in front of Pilus's saloon."

"Let me see," said Uncle Zeb, reflecting. "Yes, that is the thirteenth time I've been told of that since I came to the Corners this



afternoon. There was Bill Slater, a regular old soaker, converted at the Baptist church two years ago. He hasn't drank a drop since, but I never hear none of you say anything about *him*."

"When people set up for saints, it is not their good but their bad behavior which attracts attention."

"There is where you ain't fair, doctor. Who sets up to be saints?"

"Why, all Christians, I suppose."

"I can't speak for the rest, but—

NOTE.—This marks the last sentence of the narrative as left by the writer. The hand that had but just written those words, "I believe that in every human body there is a soul that cannot die, and that for every soul that loves the Lord Jesus Christ there is an eternity of joy,"—that hand laid down the pen for ever, and the writer ere long entered on that eternity of joy.

## CHAPTER XII.

"Thou art the true peace of the heart: thou art its only rest; out of thee all things are full of trouble and unrest."

HELEN GRANTLEY kept the promise given to Anna Dunlap, and in the days that followed her first introduction to Maria Wells she went on several occasions to read to her; but they did not get acquainted with one another readily. This was entirely Helen's fault: she was utterly uncommunicative with regard to her own thoughts and experiences, and she embarrassed the invalid by studying her with an earnest, searching scrutiny, as if she were in some way an unintelligible problem that must be solved, a little at a time. The book they were reading together happened to be one that Helen had seen before and thought very uninteresting, but Maria found it so suggestive that she often interrupted Helen to make some remark. At such times Helen would stop and

muse in silence, then go on without comment. But one day, not long after her interview with the new minister, she deliberately laid down her book, and, looking curiously at Maria, exclaimed,

“How came you to know so much when—when you have had so few opportunities? Had you learned a great deal before your illness?”

“I am not at all learned, I assure you,” laughed Maria in a soft little tone, “but I am older by ten years than you are, so I have experienced, felt and suffered more; yes, and of course *enjoyed* more. We learn much by just living, you know.”

“I have not gained much in that way,” returned Helen moodily. “Tell me what you mean; tell me, if you will, more in detail about yourself. You are not like other invalids; they talk of themselves all the time; at least, all I have ever seen did that.”

“If I tell you about myself you must do the same in regard to your own self. But where shall I begin, and how go on?”

“Tell me,” said Helen, with an eagerness

that was not mere curiosity, "how and why it is that you have grown bright, intelligent and happy, instead of becoming discontented, stupid and ugly. If I were shut up for ten years I should die, go crazy, or grow so disagreeable as to be unendurable for a companion."

Maria hesitated, not knowing where to begin.

"Describe yourself at fifteen," suggested Helen.

"Well, at fifteen I was a very merry, active girl, not so thoughtful or so mature as you are. I was not fond of study or of reading, and had not been to school at all regularly. All I know I have learned since that time. One day—it was in June, the very last day, such a perfect day!—I wanted to reach a beautiful rose that was at the top of a lattice. This last was very tall, and, as it proved, very insecure. I climbed, the frail thing tottered; I fell and was injured for life. The first year is like a nightmare in my memory. I suffered and fretted; I learned nothing. The next year I said to myself, 'This is folly. I must live; I will get what

I can out of my life.' My eyes were stronger, and I could use them more than I can now. I resolved to read nothing merely for amusement, and when I could get an interesting and at the same time an instructive book, I made it yield to me a great deal more than it gave to a careless reader. After reading a few good books in this way I had found out *how* to learn. In that bookcase are sixty-two books: I could stand a pretty close examination on their contents and meaning. All of them are good, some of them are classics. Meanwhile I studied—very slowly, to be sure, but I never had any vacation in my school, and no leave of absence; there was perfect harmony between teacher and scholar, so I succeeded in mastering several text-books."

"I am fifteen, and I have studied little—have read a great number of all sorts of books, but I do not yet know how to study. I do not want to be taught just as you have been—that is, shut up to it steadily," said Helen; adding in a moment, "But did *study* make you contented and happy?"

A faint, beautiful pink came out in the

older girl's cheeks and a soft light kindled in her eyes.

"No," she answered earnestly. "Study made me ambitious, fired me with a zeal to do something grand, to 'be some one' in the world—made me 'intolerably angry with Fate,' as I told dear old Deacon Hopkins one day. All he said to me was, 'Poor child! cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you, for he has promised that none shall seek in vain.' Such a grievous mistake as I made then, Helen! I understood the deacon to mean that if I cast my burden on the Lord (and my burden was my bodily helplessness), he would take it away, whereas the promise is that I should be sustained under my burden. I convinced myself that I needed to be a Christian, so that I might pray in faith for perfect health; then with health I could do great things. I searched my Bible for arguments; I made my plans and prayed without ceasing; I asked for no wisdom outside of myself. I besieged high Heaven as a hostile foe attacks a fort, with the fury of desperation, and after a dreadful six months' agony of

begging and pleading I was worn out, soul and body."

"What then?" asked Helen, bending closer, a strange new animation in her usually passionless face—"what then? Do not religious people say that is the kind of prayer that always prevails?"

"Then," continued Maria, "I stopped all prayer. A distinguished doctor came to the Corners to consult with Dr. Grantley over some peculiar case, and mother asked him to call and see me. He told me I could never stand on my feet, never sit in a chair even. Then came a blackness of despair. I believed nothing; I said, 'The world is full of wickedness, is full of misery, and there is no mercy, no justice. If I believe there is a God, he seems to me cruelty itself. A God of power who is not a God of pity must be a monster. My prayers are wasted efforts for body and mind.' I remember how I used to lie with shut eyes listening to the patter of little children's feet as they ran by my window—how, hearing it, I used to think, 'Poor little feet! what heavy hearts you will carry if you

go on a little longer!" and, only that I pitied the mothers left desolate, I thought, 'How *good* it is when children's feet are stilled in death!' I stopped planning—stopped striving to be or to do anything."

"But what then?" urged Helen slowly, half fearful of indelicate persistency, yet impelled to learn all.

"One midnight I was awake and wondering how many years I might have to *exist*, for it seemed to me I was not *living* in any sense of the word. I was not thinking of religious things at all, when there came into my mind these words: 'The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world;' and then it was as if the words were—how can I explain it?—made visible to my *mind's* eye. There, in the darkness of the midnight, I could not escape, did not wish to lose for the brief season it lasted, a mental picture of *my* Saviour. I forgot all doubts, all unrest, and, strangely quieted, waited, not realizing until the sunrise brightened all my room that I was in a new way ready for a *new* day."



"Do you mean you were converted?" asked Helen in a constrained tone, but with a determination to know all in its order.

"I mean that all my prayers were answered that night; only God gave me health and strength for my *soul* instead of giving it for my body. I never try to reason why all was as it was, but it seems to me that when I was worn out enough to be still and to give up my folly, heavenly help came. I might no doubt have had it sooner had I been less headstrong."

"Well, then," exclaimed Helen with strange, sudden bitterness, "I must wait for a vision perhaps."

"If you misunderstand me, Helen," cried Maria in a pained tone, "I shall be very sorry I told you all this. I do not think one is always wise in telling of personal experiences. I had no vision in any gross or literal sense. But let *my* experience go now, and tell me, my child, what Christ is doing for you."

"Nothing."

"He will do everything—yes, everything worth calling *good*."

"When? I have prayed, am praying. I get ill-tempered—nothing better in any way. I understand all you have said up to the time of your despair: soon I may know what *that* is."

"You need never know it, you—"

In a tremulous voice Maria was about to give help to the young girl whose tone betrayed the effort she was making at self-control, when Helen, rising suddenly, dropped the neglected book and hurried out of the room without another word.

The invalid shut her eyes, very weary with the hour's talk, but her lips moved in silent prayer for the troubled soul. She had no fear for the final result.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"And hence it cometh to pass that all doth little profit thee until thou well consider that I am He that doth rescue them that trust in him, and that out of me there is neither powerful help nor profitable counsel nor lasting remedy."

HELEN GRANTLEY had kept the promise made to Mr. Halsay: she had prayed night and morning—at first using his own phrase, which was to her merely a phrase quoted from memory; but soon she prayed with no set words, at no set time—prayed that what she needed might be hers. She heard of the religious meetings at the Corners, but felt little desire to attend them until Mrs. Tibbits began to betray great anxiety lest she should go notwithstanding Dr. Grantley's wishes.

"What is he afraid that the result would be if you or I went to any of these meetings?" asked Helen one evening, aroused out of her usual indifference to Mrs. Tibbits's remarks.

"Oh, he is dreadfully turned against anything religious, so that he hates the thought of a body's caring anything about a soul—a body's own soul or another person's. The house couldn't hold one of us if either happened to be converted."

"Do such things *happen*, Mrs. Tibbits? Do you think anything about *your* soul?" asked Helen, half sarcastically.

"Yes, I do. I ain't a perfect heathen, if he does try to make me one. I think it would be a consolation to enjoy some church privileges, like going to a sewing society once in a while or getting up a donation-party. I ain't a disbeliever."

"In what?" sneered Helen.

"In anything," replied Mrs. Tibbits confusedly.

Helen, in her intolerant, unhappy state, had no charity for the weak woman, who should, in her opinion, have had more force, more character—to be, in short, very much better or very much worse than she was.

"Very well," she returned. "I think I shall go to church to night; will you go and enjoy that privilege with me, Mrs. Tibbits?"

The housekeeper went about her work hurriedly in a scared way, pretending not to hear what she thought was a speech meant only to annoy her. What was her surprise a little later to see Helen come down from her chamber and go directly out on the piazza, where the doctor was resting after a long ride!

"You had better let him alone; he—" began Mrs. Tibbits, when she heard the words,

"I should like to go over to the church; have you any objections?"

Dr. Grantley stared at her a while before he asked,

"What are you going for?"

"Because I have nothing to do."

"I should not forbid your going to a circus (I hear one is coming), but I should forbid your coming home to practice walking a tight-rope on my premises. Do you know what I mean?"

"No, sir."

"Go along. Hear all the psalm-singing and all the sermonizing, all the cant, hypocrisy and nonsense, you choose to listen to

among these pious folk; but lisp a syllable of it in my house afterward if you dare! I don't care what you think, believe or pray about, so that you hold your tongue in regard to it. But if you get to confessing or professing yourself a Christian, just remember that 'birds of a feather flock together.' I'll have no more of you. The Hopkinses or Judge Balcom or Uncle Zeb will no doubt adopt you then, and you will be a regular martyr, one who is persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Helen, as she listened, had tied her bonnet-strings under her chin, and then, to Mrs. Tibbits's horror, walked away toward the church.

"What a man! he is as cruel as the—the—well, I don't know what," whispered the housekeeper to herself, retreating out of sight.

The doctor, smoking there in the twilight, was secretly glad that Helen had gone. He did not think that she was likely to get "excited," and he did not object to letting the Conesus Corners people see that a girl "brought up" by him could be preached

at and remained unmoved. If he had forced her to stay at home, they would have said he was "afraid of the power of the gospel." Oh, he knew how they talked him over. It flattered his vanity that they considered him an "interesting case," a man to be angled for and prayed for in times like these. Had he any idea that he should turn Helen out of doors if she avowed herself a Christian? No, certainly not, but it was well to let her know that she must never bother him with any "gushing piosity," as he expressed it to himself. He was, beneath all his surliness, a man, yet the young girl who walked quietly along the dusty path to the church was thinking, "I never expect to be a Christian. I cannot understand it. I do not want to be one if I must suffer for it as Maria Wells suffers. If I were to become one, however, I would not be forbidden to speak, to breathe, to tell what I believed, by Dr. Grantley; and if I disobeyed him he would not let me live there any longer. I don't care; I wish I were dead."

The lecture-room of the church was filled

when Helen entered the door, and the congregation was singing a hymn. She slipped into a seat near by, and became a quiet listener to the simple, heartfelt exercises of the evening. Mr. Halsay's address was direct, earnest and suited to the time and place. Deacon Hopkins's prayer was a mystery to her. It would have amazed the uneducated old man to know that it seemed to her like a wonderful strain of unearthly music, suggesting thoughts she could not follow, yet such as filled her eyes with tears.

Toward the last of the service Uncle Zebadiah Potter arose, saying,

"I thought I'd keep still to-night, but I just can't. I won't make no long speech, though. But, brethren, when you tell about the love of God in Christ Jesus, I *must* speak. I've heard about a man who after the war was marking the grave of a soldier and weeping over it. Folks around found out he wasn't a relative of the man buried there, and by and by somebody said, 'What is all this for? what did he ever do for *you*?' and the man broke out: 'Do? *He died for me!*' That is what comes rush-



ing over me when somebody talks about the Saviour. And to think that I have grown gray before I ever would let myself believe it! Now, if there is a stupid, tired, ignorant soul here to-night, let that soul try to realize 'He died for me.' He lived for us too; and that is what is beginning to make all my poor dull, tangled-up life seem like a straight path of light right on to a land of glory. Yes, life is bright, and death is now to me brighter yet. Deacon Hopkins took me yesterday away off over the hill to see a poor old creature dying with consumption. She'd just been a-coughing and choking, so she couldn't gasp out a single word, but she told the whole story of her soul's faith in a way, I can tell ye, I wouldn't have understood six weeks ago. The deacon, ses he, 'Sister, I think I know where your trust is?' The blood was settling purple-like for death in those poor hands of hers; she couldn't speak, but she lifted them of a sudden, palms up, touching each with a fore finger and her eyes toward heaven, as if she said, 'Not me, not me, but He whose hands were once pierced with nails for me.'

Oh, can any mortal, can any weary, lonesome soul, resist the love of Christ?"

"That is the very man who asked me about six weeks ago if I was a Christian," thought Helen, "but he did not seem then as he does to-night. They are Presbyterians here too; I supposed only Methodists talked like this. Maria, however, cannot be a Methodist."

After Uncle Zeb's remarks, Judge Balcom made a very sounding and elaborate speech to the effect that there was an alphabet of religious thought and experience—that many Christians were in the *a b c* class. This was well, but let such babes in spiritual matters be meek; let them not be trying to teach when they had but learned first principles. What the judge meant was not very clear to any one, unless it might have been to Uncle Zeb. Helen merely received the impression that the judge's own religious education must be in a very advanced stage of progress, for surely he intended to convey that idea; and who should know better about his condition than he himself?

Just before the last hymn she was aware

that the judge was looking at her in a very steadfast, business-like way. After the benediction he came to her directly and inquired,

"Are you the young woman living with Dr. Grantley?"

A girl of fifteen does not think herself a "woman," and with a dim notion that he was asking for Mrs. Tibbits, who was not so very old, she replied,

"I am Helen Grantley."

"And are you bearing the yoke yet, or are you still accused under the law?"

"I—I—am living there yet," stammered Helen, wholly ignorant of his intention then, and later when he added dictatorially,

"You had best remain to the inquiry-meeting and state your case to me."

Did he suppose she had property and wanted to consult a lawyer to change her guardian? Had Mrs. Tibbits been telling people how uncomfortable her life was?

"I have nothing to say to any one; I am poor and dependent on the doctor. I have no claim on him, so I suppose I ought to be grateful for my support."

"Most certainly—*most* certainly you

ought," returned the judge, puzzled in his turn.

"If you're going home now, Miss Helen," put in Uncle Zeb's kindly voice, "I'll sort o' see you safe to your gate; there isn't no moon up yet, and it's darkish."

"Miss Grantley will remain for the next meeting and have some private conversation with me," said the judge, rather loftily.

"Oh no, I have nothing to say to you, and should not think of saying it in such a place if I had," said Helen, walking away quickly and gladly with Uncle Zeb.

Yes, Uncle Zeb had only just learned his alphabet, but every letter in it was to him a beautiful golden one. He longed to give some person as ignorant as he had been the key to heavenly lore; so, as he walked along by the young girl, he told her simply what had come into his life since that Sunday they were last together.

He returned to the church after leaving her, wishing to learn if the meetings were to be continued throughout the week, the attendance having fallen off somewhat. He met Judge Balcom, who told him they would

be held every alternate evening, and then asked,

"Is that girl a convert?"

"No."

"I thought not. Somebody spoke to me of her, and I intended to reach her a helping hand. She appears stupid, or possibly she is hardened. If she has to hear the wicked conversation of that ungodly Grantley, no doubt she is morally blind."

"Dr. Grantley is not a first-rate guide for a young girl. I'm proper sorry for her; she needs help. She didn't say very much to me to-night, but I kind o' made out the lay of the land. If she—poor young creature!—comes out and says she is going to try and live the best life she can find out about, she has just got to give up somethin', and that right straight off," said Uncle Zeb slowly; adding in a minute, "I declare, I was put to it to tell her what to do—that is, to know what was her duty."

"I think you would have done better if you had left her to me, Brother Potter. The zeal of an immature Christian has, in a measure, its own excuse, but it is wise to reflect

that no one is gifted with a sanctified judgment in the outset of the course. What was the cause of your discomfiture?"

"If anything stands in the way of her coming out, judge?"

"Say to her at once, 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.' I've no doubt she, poor sinner! clings to some carnal pleasure—dancing, very likely. You should have dealt very plainly with the young woman. She *must* yield up her will and affections."

"I said pretty much that to her, judge, and I told her we'd stand by her, we'd help her in every way, to the best of our ability. Was I rash?"

"We covenant to do that, Mr. Potter, in our church-vows."

"Wa'll, then, the thing is right here in a shape like this: the girl hasn't a cent in her own right—is utterly dependent on Dr. Grantley. He clothes, feeds and keeps her without work. He does it because she is distantly related to him. To-night, just afore she set out for church, he sort o' give her a choice: she could stay with him if she made no claim to being a Christian—shut

the bushel down tight, as a patent cover over her light, if so be she was to get a light in her candlestick—or she could walk right straight out of his house and his care. That's what she said as we was going home. Would you have counseled her to quit? Of course you would, though—didn't I just hear your opinion about giving up?"

The judge was amazed, shocked, but chiefly that Uncle Zeb should take the liberty of interpreting him to himself. He hastened to put in a protest:

"We were not speaking of—of houses and lands, but of states of mind and of sinful indulgences. The young woman must be discreet. The doctor is her natural protector, and has a limited right to control her conduct. She must not rush into the world having no means of support—"

"But for principle, judge, remember; and she would come right to us of course," said Uncle Zeb, with a twinkle in his eye.

There were reproof and dignity in his companion's mien as he exclaimed,

"Beware of fanaticism, of appeals to passion, my dear brother Potter. This is a very

delicate matter. I propose we leave it entirely to Mr. Halsay, with whom the care of souls is a profession. Neither you nor I can advise a young, foolish girl to take any hasty step which she may bitterly regret—much less must she be encouraged to look to us for her support and maintenance.”

Uncle Zeb having reached a corner, the judge parted with him, turning toward his home, which was the most pretentious dwelling of the Corners. His humble companion bid him good-night with an expression half comical, half sad. He did not think the judge was a hypocrite—he knew him to be well-meaning and a man of integrity, even though stingy and very opinionated. A great writer has said, “We only believe as deep as we live.” The depths of Judge Balcom’s heart had never been stirred by any strong emotion, any great impulse of love toward God or his fellow-man; and this was a fact vaguely apprehended by Uncle Zeb thus early in his association with him as a Christian brother.

When Mr. Potter left Helen that night she was in a strange frame of mind—one



in which Judge Balcom would certainly not have been able to understand or help her. She found the front-door open, but no one in the dimly-lighted room first entered. Evidently, Mrs. Tibbits had gone to bed, and the doctor might have been called away. Helen was singularly indifferent and unemonstrative at all times, but a trifle suddenly overcame her, the recollection of Judge Balcom's words; "*young woman.*" What sort of a woman could she be? To what good thing could she ever attain? The girl's whole nature was awake and clamoring. She knew not how to still it into dumbness again. With a cry as of physical pain she bowed her head and burst into tears.

"What is the matter?" asked Dr. Grantley, suddenly uprising from a sofa in shadow. "Are you ill, Helen?"

His tone was so humane that for a moment she did not know who spoke. As a physician he was always more agreeable than as a man. As she made no reply, he crossed the room, turned on a fuller light, and felt her pulse, or would have done so had she not snatched her hand back quickly, saying,

"I am well enough in body."

"But not in mind? Well, mind and body act together; what is the trouble? Maybe I can ease it off with something or other."

The girl's eyes were black with excitement, her cheeks were scarlet, and the doctor, studying her, said to himself, "She is hysterical; they have wrought on her feelings down there, and this is the result. I never knew she could get excited before; it is rather interesting."—But aloud he repeated firmly, "What is it?"

For the same reason that people took disagreeable potions or tried to do painful things when he bade them, Helen, almost to her own surprise, answered, "I am miserable and discontented;" then waited to hear a sarcasm, but none came. The doctor drew his chair close to hers and watched her thoughtfully a moment:

"*Why* are you miserable?"

"Because I am good for nothing. I have no ability or chance to be better or to know anything. I ought to be thankful to you for food and shelter—perhaps it is wicked

that I am not—but I don't seem to be thankful for just living if I have all there is for me. I don't want to be another Mrs. Tibbits."

"I don't think you will resemble her in the least," said Dr. Grantley, dryly.

"No, I shall be worse. I am growing worse every day. But I don't wish to be bad; I would like to be good."

There was something so child-like in the tone of the young girl as she half sobbed out these words that the seemingly hard man at her side returned, in the kindest way he had ever used toward her,

"You are likely to grow up all right. You have good blood in you; your mother was a lady and your father a scholar—a man of some spirit too, if he was a parson. As to your not knowing anything, the house is full of books. I do not choose to have you attend school here, because the school commissioners are a set of dumb-heads who refused to act on my suggestions in regard to matters I can judge of better than they can; but I thought you were doing well enough. To-morrow I will examine you,

and if you are anxious to learn regular lessons, I will set them for you, and hear you recite them myself."

Helen made no answer. It seemed like a dream. She knew that Dr. Grantley was a finely-educated man, but she would as soon have expected the czar of all the Russias to act as her teacher as to have the doctor propose to hear her lessons.

He looked at her a while in silence, then carelessly inquired,

"What did they make you believe down at the church to-night?"

A strange questioning look came into Helen's eyes; she grew pale, and unconsciously arose from her seat, saying,

"I thank you very much; I thought you *meant* to make me ignorant and miserable. I would like—to—like you. I have not liked you, and it seemed mean while I was eating your bread. But if you think something is wrong or silly, and I think it is right, you will be angry, for I must keep trying to know about—these—Christians, if they *are* better or—happier—for what they believe."

He gave her a slightly unceremonious push back into the chair, and there actually seemed on his face a grim smile:

"You are not deceitful, it seems, if you are quiet, and you have the Grantley will *to have your will*. We are getting acquainted famously. Well, go to bed; I will give you a quieting powder that will counteract any of Uncle Zeb's attempts to get the Grantley out of you. He is the biggest toad down there in the puddle just now, it seems. So you have not liked me much?" he added in a slower tone. "Well, perhaps I have not made myself always agreeable, but Tibbits is wearing, and you never seemed to be of any consequence any way. If there is good stuff in you, and you can show it, we will take a new start. Good-night."

He took out his pocket-case of medicine, prepared her a powder, told her to keep her nerves in order, and then sent her away with a hand-shake. She went to her room, laid down the powder on the bed and stared at it, thinking that if she had already swallowed it she might believe that she was losing all sense of realities under its effects.

Was there real humanity in Dr. Grantley, after all? If he realized she was unhappy would he care? It seemed to-night as if he had just awakened to her existence.

At breakfast-time he was as silent and stern as ever; soon after he drove away, and was absent for hours. But late in the afternoon Helen heard him calling her to come to his office, which occupied one wing of the old-fashioned house. He had a pile of school-books before him, and, ordering her to sit down, he questioned her a while on their contents, and then gave her lessons to prepare. After that he quietly drew her on to tell of her reading, what she liked and remembered. He was cold and business-like in manner, but not at all rough. It even seemed to the girl that he treated her with a respect never before accorded her. When she was going away with the books he remarked,

"You said you did not know anything. You are not a fool; you can learn as fast and as much as you like. You have read more than girls of your age usually read of books worth calling literature."

She had reached the door when he said,

"Wait a minute. I suppose girls like you think themselves miserable when they have no fine feathers and no giggling girls to tell their secrets to. You are at liberty to make friends for yourself, and to bring them here if you will keep them away from my part of the house. Take this and buy finery if you want it."

After long self-repression Helen was too shy, as well as too much astonished, to do anything but catch her breath and retreat with the roll of money thrust into her hands. On any ordinary occasion she avoided Mrs. Tibbits, but in a time like this somebody must tell her if she were in her right mind. She walked slowly through the dark intermediate rooms until she reached the kitchen, where the housekeeper sat sewing by the open window. The kitchen was the only really pleasant room in the house, for sunshine was always here, with no fear of Dr. Grantley's intrusion. Helen, to heighten the effect of her communication, seated herself near Mrs. Tibbits and began to count out her greenbacks.

"What bill is that for? There is more

than the flour comes to. Why, there are three tens and a five!"

"Yes, and it is all mine. Dr. Grantley wants me to buy myself new clothes with it."

"Going into society with him perhaps," laughed Mrs. Tibbits feebly. Helen so seldom jested it was worth her pains to make a similar effort.

"No; I am only going to school to him. He is to hear my lessons every day at the time that suits him best. I do not know what it does mean," she added, entering warmly into the story of her late interviews with the head of the house.

The whole matter was inexplicable to Mrs. Tibbits, who rolled up her watery little eyes, clasped her hands and ejaculated at intervals,

"For the land's sake! for the lan—d's sake!"

What did move Dr. Grantley? Who knows? Perhaps some impulse of a once-generous nature was stirred at sight of an intellectual want to which he could minister. Perhaps conscience awakened in him after Uncle Zeb's rebukes, and he reflected that



he owed some duty to this child in his care, for as a child he had heretofore looked on Helen. Perhaps Deacon Hopkins's prayers had something to do with it.

"And now," thought the young girl, "I shall be happy, for I can be and do and learn whatever I like; as to the rest, that which old Mr. Potter talks of, I cannot tell; I do not understand."

## CHAPTER XIV.

"The world promiseth things temporal and mean, and is served with great eagerness. I promise things most high and eternal, and yet the hearts of men remain torpid and insensible."

THERE was at Conesus Corners a little old-fashioned inn, as quaint and home-like as if it had been for a hundred years in some quiet English hamlet instead of being of no interest, ancient or historic. It was enough for Mr. Halsay that it was called "The Conesus Temperance House," that it had good food and neat rooms, and that here he could board, having his study in a little room of the church. He was not so desirous of a strictly private life as to attempt making a home for himself in any of the families of his parishioners. Some of them thought this unfortunate for him. Judge Balcom was secretly much chagrined when Mr. Halsay did not catch at an intimation from him that, although a boarder in *his*

family was heretofore an unheard-of thing, he might in this case be induced to open his door to his own pastor. He added that from out of his long experience with the Corners church he could undoubtedly give wholesome counsel in Mr. Halsay's times of need. The minister, to his surprise, treated the proposal lightly, telling him he was such an objectionable person to any housekeeper that he had best stay at an inn. He said he wanted to walk his room as he composed his sermons, to forget the dinner-hour and keep nobody waiting, to be silent without the risk of seeming unsocial, with other objections equally trivial in the judge's eyes.

But if Mr. Halsay did not board in any private family, he had ample opportunities to study the homes of his parish, and, with few exceptions, the peculiarities of their inmates. When the unusual interest in the extra meetings of the church perceptibly abated, all the people who had thronged to hear the new minister preach seemed moved by a common desire to make a tea-party for him or to see him by their fire-

sides in some simpler way. Uncle Zeb had at his hospitable big house a "church sociable," and not a man, woman or child who was ever one of the congregation escaped his invitation. All the poor were out in full force, and the sick shared in the good things provided, for the supper to which they could not come went to them. It was a party after the minister's heart, because a great many people were brought together for the first time in a friendly, social way. Uncle Zeb invited Dr. Grantley, Mrs. Tibbits and Helen. The doctor received his invitation, sent through Helen, with a scornful laugh, but he said nothing against the acceptance of the others, to whom a "sociable" was an event.

"I haven't been anywhere for so long," declared Mrs. Tibbits as they started for the Potters' house that evening, "that I am in a regular twitter of excitement. How ever *shall* I enter the room?"

"Why, walk in, I beg of you," said Helen coolly; "I am sure any unusual gymnastics will be uncalled for."

"How can you be so composed, when you

never go anywhere? How do you know that you will behave properly?"

"I shall use my common sense."

"To be sure; I never thought of that. Well, then, too, you never looked so well in your life as you do now-a-days; and that gives a body pluck sometimes. You appear like other girls in that new dress, if it is plain, and since you have been to Sunday-school you *are* more like other folks."

"Thank you," returned Helen, rather cynically, but Mrs. Tibbits, not heeding the tone, thought her only grateful.

In many ways the young girl was changing rapidly. If she was not happy, she was far less morbid; life had begun to be of interest to her. The day she carried her books back to Dr. Grantley's office and recited her well-learned lesson she discovered that no better teacher could be desired, and he decided that she had a mind worth cultivating, although he did not mention the fact to her. She spent no more hours moping, but studied with zeal and ambition. The Sunday-school had indeed done her good in several ways. The immediate results were of the

character noticed by Mrs. Tibbits. In countless little modifications of dress and manner she showed that the contact with girls of her own age had been salutary and timely. Her teacher was Miss Eunice Hopkins. She received Helen with no more and with not less cordiality than she would have shown toward any other young girl; and this was well: had she been too friendly, Helen, prejudiced by Dr. Grantley, would have thought her hypocritical; had she shown any trace of aversion, the young sharp eyes would have detected that. Perhaps the girls could not have had a better teacher in some respects. They were all at an age when a more emotional woman might easily have turned them toward religious sentimentality. Not so did Eunice; she emphasized the *doing* right, the *being* right, their moral obligations toward God and man, and she let them know that moods and tenses of mere feeling were of slight consideration in her opinion. Helen was learning of her to think, to search her Bible, to ask daily for light from above, and to use what light she already had.

But to return to Uncle Zeb's party, on the way to which we left Mrs. Tibbits and Helen. The former contrived to pass successfully through the ordeal of entrance, and Helen soon found herself in a group of classmates. They were in fine spirits, and chattering as such girls always can and usually do chatter.

"He comes the *nearest* to my ideal of—well, of a hero such as we read about in stories—the nearest of any one I ever saw," Bell Haton was remarking enthusiastically.

"Why, Bell Haton," exclaimed Anne Dunlap, "only last week you said your ideal hero was always sad and—*saucy*, wasn't it?"

"Oh, Anne—'saucy'? I said satirical."

"Well, Herbert Balcom certainly is not sad, whatever else he may be.—Good-evening, Helen. Have you had a glimpse of the judge's idol?" asked Anne gayly, making a place for the new-comer.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Have you never heard of the judge's son? The father never can have talked five minutes with you then."

"I have seen him when he has been at home in vacations, I believe. He is very handsome and very remarkable for something, is he not?"

"For everything," returned Anne. "Why, according to the judge, the wonderful, admirable Cr—what do you call him—whom we read of, must have been overrated; and nobody before this date has known Latin or Greek or mathematics, or any other 'tics or 'isms or 'ologies, like unto 'my son Herbert.'"

"He must be uncommonly brilliant, Anne," persisted Bell Haton, "for others besides his own father say he is."

"Oh, of course. I know he has always taken all the prizes there were to take at school and college, but we don't care. He won't look at 'bread-and-butter' school-girls of our age," said Anne cruelly. Bell had aspirations toward young-ladyhood which practical Anne thought altogether premature.

Judge Balcom might not have seen fit to attend this "mixed" assemblage at Mr. Potter's if his only son had not been at home. This being the case, he never failed to appear



in every public place with him. He was a young man of whom any father might be proud. The judge was a handsome man, and his son was still handsomer. The judge was pompous; Herbert was truly courteous. The father had natural abilities, but in early life lacked means of culture; his boy had received every advantage that could be procured for him. While his father's wealth was generously poured out for his education, for books, for long, expensive tours, Herbert never failed to reward that partial generosity by improving himself to the utmost. He inherited none of the judge's narrowness; he was warm-hearted and liberal, singularly unspoiled by indulgence and flattery.

Mr. Halsay, who had heard his praises sounded until he was heartily tired of his name even before his arrival from college, was agreeably surprised by the young man. He watched him with interest, noting how genially he recalled to Uncle Zeb some boyish prank for which the old man had once given him a shaking; then seeing him spend ten minutes with Eunice Hopkins, and actually getting her to smile on him the remain-

der of the evening. He did not seem to care for the young girls' society in any marked degree, and if any of them were (as Bell Haton was) disappointed on this account, they admired him none the less.

"Are ye goin' to keep Bert home a spell now?" asked Mr. Potter as the judge stopped to speak to Deacon Hopkins, who was chatting with his host in a quiet corner.

"For a few weeks. I'm going to turn him loose on my farm, let him hunt and fish a little, then in September he sails for Europe."

"What! ye don't say? What is he takin' himself to furrin parts for?" asked Uncle Zeb curiously.

"Well, the boy is ambitious—I won't deny that fact," admitted the judge with a sort of lofty frankness. "He thinks there is a culture to be acquired in the study of new peoples, arts, continental languages, and all that, not to be obtained by any prolonged sojourn in Conesus Corners."

"Like as not now, there mebbe," commented Uncle Zeb; adding, "Will he go to the Holy Land? Mr. Halsay was a-telling us about his visit there?"

"I shall give him a letter of credit that will take him from 'pole to pole,' as the hymn says. He deserves it—he has studied hard. If ever a chap left a better record in college, I'd like to see him."

"That must be so wonderful," said the deacon dreamily, "to walk the streets of old Jerusalem, to stand where John and Peter and Christ himself once stood."

The judge that moment received some new idea, for he exclaimed,

"By the way, deacon, next week we'll settle that little affair of ours. I find I must scrape together my pennies in order to get Bert off."

"I have not forgotten," answered the deacon; and Judge Balcom moved on, saying,

"I must take Mr. Halsay to task for the closing part of his Wednesday evening lecture. I disagree with him very decidedly."

"I thought you was out of Balcom's clutches, so to speak, deacon; hain't that mortgage been paid up yet?"

"I am sorry to say it is not, but I hope to pay the last cent next week. My last year's apple-crop was a perfect failure—

never had such a year since I farmed it; but we've been mighty economical. Eunice is a famous manager, and to-night I've got the wherewith to pay the judge. I shall be glad, for he is very business-like and prompt."

"Very—as prompt, every whit, as the Bible character that took his neighbor by the throat while he was a-requestin' of him to settle up square; but he is honest, Balcom is, if he ain't over and above merciful. Hello, now! who is this leetle youngster with a head like a dandelion just blossomed out?"

"This," answered the deacon tenderly, "is my Benjamin's child."

"Sure enough! I heerd about that. Well, it was rough all 'round. There ain't any Hopkins about that face, though," continued Uncle Zeb, gazing at Yolande, who studied him in turn.

She was a beautiful child, now that country air and good food had brought a soft color to her rounded cheeks; moreover, she inherited from her French mother pretty, gentle manners, which made her singular-

ly attractive by contrast with the little rustics at the Corners. She climbed into her grandfather's lap, slipped her tiny hands into his big withered ones, and contentedly watched the company which filled the low, old-fashioned rooms. The young girls found her out soon and petted her—all but Helen. She was attracted by the child, by the deacon, even by her grave peculiar teacher Miss Eunice; but, warned by Mrs. Tibbits, she refrained from any manifestation of her interest in the Hopkins family. She did not want to have her new liberty of church-going curtailed.

“Good-evening, Miss Helen.” said Mr. Halsay, coming to her as she stood for a moment alone. “I received the message you sent me through Mr. Potter, and I am very glad you are able to study at home with so fine a teacher as Dr. Grantley must be. I have not forgotten our talk in the woods that day. I was trying to plan how to help you in your education when the message came. I hope your life is more satisfying now than you found it then?”

“Yes—and no,” replied Helen slowly,

waiting as if she thought he expected her to say more, yet not herself knowing just what to say.

"It is 'yes' perhaps, because you are going to 'know something' now, to use your own words," he suggested kindly.

"I think that makes me much more contented," she replied.

"Does the 'no' mean, then, that this other knowledge of which we talked seems as far off and as unattainable as ever? I hope, my child, you are not mystifying yourself needlessly. Belief and love come easily to the simple-hearted *through* prayer. Do you keep your promise to me?"

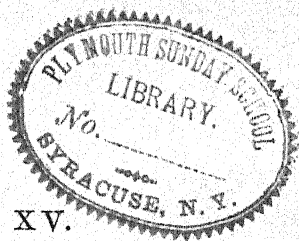
"I have sometimes forgotten it, but not often."

"All will be well with you," he returned, and was about to add something when Judge Balcom bore down on the minister, and without so much as a nod to Helen engaged him in the defence of his last sermon.

Left to herself, Helen's attention was absorbed by the judge's son. Not that he came and talked to her—he was ignorant of her existence—but he was the centre of

a group not far away which seemed pleased with his conversation.

"If one were in his place," she thought to herself, "life would be richly worth living. What desirable thing is there which he does not possess? He is ready now for anything, and he knows what power is—power of personal attraction, power of intellect, of position. He can make his own way anywhere, can do anything within reason a man would wish to do. I wish I were in his place. I fear I am naturally restless and discontented. I envied Anne Dunlap because she had pretty dresses and friends and could go to school. Now that these last are within my reach I envy somebody else. But there is Mrs. Tibbits making eyes at me; she is afraid the doctor will scold if she stays later. Well, I will go. I won't torment her hereafter as I have done. She is not to blame for not being brilliant; she did not make herself. Heigho! what was I made for, anyway?"



## CHAPTER XV.

"When a man hath compunction of heart, then is the whole world grievous and bitter unto him."

BEFORE knowing her niece Eunice Hopkins had mentally divided little girls of Yolande's age into two classes—those who were "seen, but not heard;" those who were given over to dirt, deceit and to taking the biggest piece of cake on the plate. Yolande was of neither class; she was always sensitive, often shy, then again as outspoken as Eunice herself. She kept her person and attire as neat and dainty as a veritable little Frenchwoman, but she persisted in filling all Eunice's vases, cups and tumblers with wild flowers, and she preferred to roam the woods instead of learning to sew or acquiring little housewifely habits. She did not talk much to Eunice, whose answers were rarely satisfactory and seldom adapted to her comprehension. Eunice, on her part,



never could follow the child's peculiar trains of thought, and often considered them very "nonsensical." The old deacon understood her more readily, and humored her in many a whim. He could often calm her when, strangely enough, methodical, practical Eunice had excited her whole imaginative nature. One day the child was following a toad, greatly interested in his motions; all at once she left him, seated herself on the great stone at the kitchen-door and asked,

"Aunt Eunice, what is eternity like?"

"It is like to-day if to-day had never had any beginning and never was to have any end," replied her aunt in a tone which implied, "That question can be disposed of once for all."

"How can it be so?" persisted Yolande. "I can't think about it."

"Of course you can't; it is a *mystery*. You can just suppose it is like a great circle or ring turning and turning, and never stopping."

Yolande said no more, only pondered a while, but about eleven o'clock that night she startled her aunt by exclaiming in the

dark by her bedside, "Oh, Aunt Eunice, I *never* shall go to sleep! What made you have it a *big ring*?"

"A what?" called Eunice, sitting upright and clutching out after the slim figure.

"Oh, that awful turning ring like eternity right over my bed, you know, and I can't forget it. I shut my eyes, and it gets big and draws in small, and then grows big and turns fast, faster, but never is going to stop. What made you start it a ring, Aunt Eunice?" she wailed dismally.

"It's the measles; they have got 'em at the Bend," ejaculated Eunice, laying hold of a bedpost, as if taking it into her confidence. "She's been exposed, has taken cold, and instead of coming out they've gone to her head. She must have a sweat the first thing."

She hurried on her clothes and began to make a fire in the kitchen, the noise of which aroused the deacon, who hastened to join Eunice.

"I'm not sick one bit, grandpa," cried Yolande plaintively from Eunice's bed, where she had been hastily thrust. He

went into the room, heard her story, and instituted *his* course of treatment. Seeing that a wearisome idea was tormenting the nervous child, he told her a story of the colt in the north pasture while Eunice made ginger tea. He broke the "ring," and then changed the idea by talking to her of a beautiful life in heaven growing more blessed for ever; then, slipping away to the pantry, he brought "Benjamin's child" a bowl of bread and milk. When Eunice's preparations for the "sweat" were complete she found Yolande in the deacon's arms, and both of them peacefully sleeping in her Boston rocking-chair. From that night Eunice saw fit to send the child to her grandfather when there were mysteries to be discussed.

At first Yolande was to her aunt not Benjamin's child; she was *that French woman's child*, and Eunice's heart did not at once go out toward her. But Yolande was too bright, too sweet, to be long unappreciated. Moreover, Eunice was in time convinced that the child's mother had been exceedingly lovable and possessed of qualities that would have won even Eunice's esteem. In

the little oak chest that had held all the child's possessions when she returned with the deacon had been put her mother's papers. There was a pathetic little book of the nature of a diary, begun the first day the young mother took entire charge of her baby. It was meant to be "The Story of our Yolande," for her to read when she became a woman. It wove into its simple pages the mother's thoughts and hopes, her own experiences, as well as, what comforted Eunice greatly, constant allusions to Benjamin. He was so "kind," so free from evil habits, so "good," in the eyes of the loving young wife. With the book were records of the mother's birth and parentage; *her* mother had been of a fine old family in Rouen. Little did Eunice care for "French aristocracy," but if Yolande's mother had been a "player," it comforted Eunice to know that she was at the same time a respectable woman. She stowed away the records of the Boulayé family carefully, and told the deacon that she sincerely hoped Benjamin's wife's *father* would never appear to claim kinship to Yolande.

The deacon thought there was no probability that he would do this, inasmuch as he had not troubled himself to find his daughter in her illness and poverty.

Yolande, since her arrival at the Corners, had gone constantly to church; she had been taken to the sociable; and, in short, wherever Eunice and the deacon went together she had gone, simply because they could not leave her alone at home. She had noticed that here everybody seemed to know everybody else, and the Corners to her childish fancy was a place where people were far kinder than they were in New York. When they met her here playing under the trees, they talked to her and seemed to be interested in her. Presuming on this fact, little Yolande planned one day an expedition of her own. She had seen the inside of several of the houses near the Hopkins farm, but this big, old-fashioned one of Dr. Grantley she had not seen, and she knew nothing of its inmates. It was late one beautiful afternoon when, forgetting her white sun-bonnet left on a fence-post, the child strolled away across the intervening pasture-land,

stopping in a great patch of ox-eyed daisies to gaze down into their white and golden upturned faces before she picked a long-stemmed bunch of them. There was no one in the Grantley garden with its straggling paths bordered with gooseberry-bushes, its vegetables, its sunflowers and double hollyhocks. Yolande's great eyes saw everything. She meant to ask for one tall blue fleur-de-luce and plenty of cinnamon pinks. There was no one in the tidy kitchen, or in the long, gloomy hall, or in the darkened suite of rooms through which the child slipped like a stray sunbeam. She came at last to a door opening into a brightly-lighted and rather attractive apartment, where, with his back to the door, sat a gentleman. Suddenly a late timidity awed her, and just over the threshold she stood still. Uncle Zeb was right when he said there was no "Hopkins in her face." When sober, as now, no child was ever more like its mother. As if aware of something, Dr. Grantley turned and sat *still* in silent amazement, his startled eyes fixed on the little figure. Something in that gaze made her stammer gravely,

"I was not going to make you scared. Mamma would not ever let me do so after I did it once—twice, I think it was, I made her start."

"Who are you? Come nearer and tell me what you want."

"Why, I don't *want* anything; I came visiting and to see what the inside of your house looked like. I like to see things and—people," she added, slowly drawing near a step at a time, accustomed to obey, but not attracted by her sombre-faced questioner.

He reached out his hand and moved her where the light from his window glistened on her soft curls and flushed cheeks. Her big, dark eyes were shyly turned on the clenched daisies. He almost shook her as he hurriedly repeated,

"Who are you, I say?"

"Why, I am Yolande."

"Where on earth did you come from?"

"Over there;" and she pointed a small thumb toward the east.

"From the Hopkins's?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did old Hopkins send you?"

She looked him full in the face now, puzzled, then resentful:

"It is not nice to say *old* Hopkins: you are old yourself, I guess, if your hair is not pretty and white. You have got ugly wrinkles in your forehead, and I do not like you pretty much."

"Did he send you?" he persisted grimly.

"No; my grandpa is not home. Nobody sent me. I came, but I'll go in a minute."

"Do you live over there?"

"Yes, for always now. I did not once time, though, but I never got daisies in New York, nor saw little calves nor chickens. I was lonesome there, because my mamma was very, very white and could not sit up; she only coughed all day. I think she coughed all night, for she said I must not sleep with her, she would keep me awake. One night, when I was out of the room, she went right up into the sky. I would not have let her go if I had been there. I wanted my mamma—she was *mine*;" and the great eyes slowly filled with tears.

Dr. Grantley arose and pulled down the window-curtain with a jerk, muttering,



"I believe they sent her, tricky old— If you have seen me and seen the house, you can go," he added, turning his back on his small guest.

"I think I will go; I think we don't like each other pretty much. The garden is nicer where the gooseberries grow, and the hollyhocks nicer than the old books and bottles in here. Good-bye."

She was going to the door, trailing daisies, losing them out of her straggling bunch, but she looked back over her shoulder when he said,

"Let me look at you a minute longer, so I will know you next time I happen to see you in the streets or at play; you will not ever come here. There are no children here; we don't wish any; I don't like children."

She understood perfectly that her six-foot host was trying to show her that unexpected calls like hers of to-day were unwelcome. She was quick, and also proud, with something of her mother's nature; so when he held out a small coin to her she shook her yellow head, and, disappearing over the

threshold, he heard the patter of her little feet across the hall-floor fainter and fainter. He fancied her flitting through the dark house behind and out into the sunshine with God's other happy creatures—with birds and bees and gay butterflies. Yes, this man had fancies, and even sentiment; he had a heart and a conscience, and sometimes the one ached and remorse awakened in the other. How passionately he had loved that other Yolande, who might have loved him in return if she had never known Benjamin Hopkins! This lovely child brought back all his vain hopes, his reckless strivings to win what he believed would have made him happy, and perhaps good. But if she looked at him out of great soft brown eyes like her mother's, she had made him remember who was her father, and how people had said if Benjamin Hopkins had never known Dr. Grantley he would never have been ruined. Yet in those days, gone now for ever, he had not meant deliberately to wreck the young man's life—far from it. He had liked the frank, fun-loving young fellow. He was himself just tasting the gayest, wildest excitements

of life in a great city, and he honestly thought it a pity that Ben should miss all these and go prosing along like the farmers' lads at the Corners. He had not counted on the Hopkins blood there was in him, the pertinacity, the "go in and go on," that made him when once started stubbornly refuse to go back. Yet when he saw this trait in Ben he liked him even better than he had liked him in his boyish days, and if he would see the world who could show it to him more thoroughly than Grantley, whose college-life had been spent in the city, whose medical studies had been pursued in Paris? So they were boon companions in New York until that night when they first met Yolande in her young beauty, her charming ignorance. Her father was a gambler, a reckless, bad man, but he guarded his child well. He, the old Frenchman, made sure that Grantley loved her, that he revered her girlish, simple character, before he let him visit them and fed his hope of gaining Yolande's love, even fooled him with the belief that she did already love him. Like a thunderbolt the knowledge one night came

to him that she loved Benjamin Hopkins, the farmer's son—that she had not a thought for him, the older, wiser, richer man. He was beside himself after that; he plunged into dissipations of every sort, and would gladly have dragged Ben after him. A whirlwind of anger, jealousy, wounded pride and revenge impelled him to first beg Yolande's father to make her consent to marry him, then to cause Benjamin to appear to her bad and unworthy. Their marriage and flight removed them from his influence. His own father's health failed. He resolved to be a *man*; that for him meant to restrain himself, to stop gambling, stop drinking and to go to work in his chosen profession. He had a powerful will, and there was for him a grim delight in the fact, as he expressed it to himself, that "Grantley had one master—Grantley."

He heard no more of Ben or of his young wife until nearly two years had passed. Then, going to Cincinnati to attend a medical convention, he had fallen in with some old chums who had been in the wild days of the past also Ben's acquaintances. One of

them knew of Ben's whereabouts, and Grantley agreed to go with him to spend an evening with Hopkins and "talk over old times." On the way they stopped at a fashionable saloon; Grantley drank moderately, allowing himself that privilege, as he assured himself, for the sake of politeness to his comrade, who drained more than one glass of brandy.

When they arrived at their destination Ben was evidently not glad to see Grantley, and that enraged the man who had once known his unbounded influence over him. As the evening went by bad blood was stirred. The mutual acquaintance who had brought Grantley felt something unpleasant in the air, and, being sufficiently under the effect of brandy to resent without understanding it, grew personal and unpleasant in his remarks. Grantley coolly spurred him on while appearing as polished, as gentlemanly, as Ben had ever seen him. Ben sat near a little table of the plainly-furnished flat. There was a child's rattle on the floor by Grantley's chair, and through a half-closed door he heard at intervals a soft, low song

like a mother crooning to a baby. Bad and hardened as he was, of a sudden the impulse came to rise up and to go away from this home. No wonder was it that Ben was not glad to see the incarnation of all his old sins and temptations. It looked as if he had shaken off a little power of the past. He would not ask to see Yolande; he would leave a courteous message for her and depart. He had scarcely done this first when his bewildered, irritated comrade made to Ben a slighting remark about the "little French-woman." Ben, overturning the table in his rage, rushed on him. The drunken fool drew his revolver; there was a scuffle of a second. Grantley, although he sprang upon them to separate them, to disarm one, had not time to seize the pistol before the fatal shot was fired. As he grasped for the weapon it went off in the hand of his comrade, and was unconsciously thrust into his own, while Ben fell to the floor mortally wounded. Oh, the awful picture left for ever in his memory! The friend of his boyhood bleeding at his feet; the only woman he ever loved crying out in anguish at the sight that met her eyes when,

white and breathless, she rushed into his presence! Was it any wonder that when the first awful horror was on him he had made no explanations, and Yolande, distracted by the tragedy, had made no accusations? Later that night his comrade, sobered and wild with fear, had begged him to flee, that he might never be a witness to testify against him. The man easily slipped into deceit when, to his glad surprise, he learned from Yolande's lips that she supposed Dr. Grantley had fired the shot, and for him to free himself from blame was comparatively easy, because Grantley had left the city at once. It would have been almost as terrible to Grantley to have now been told that any one believed him to be the actual destroyer of Hopkins's life as the statement had been overwhelming to the deacon when made by the dying woman. He was spared that horror this lovely afternoon as scene after scene of the past rose up to harrow his mind, but he had enough, more than enough, for his remorse to dwell on. Was it not bitter to realize that life held for him nothing sweet or satisfying—that he had nothing pleasant to look back on, nothing

alluring in the future? He had no ambition, no belief in any unselfish affection for him possessed by any human being. He had no God, no faith, no heaven.

All this went through his thoughts as he stood waiting to know the child had left the house; but when, turning, he glanced out of the office-window and saw her moving slowly through the pasture daisies again, her head but little higher than the tallest of them, he suddenly wished she were just for a moment within his reach again. He wanted to touch her soft hair, to see if her eyes could grow tender and wistful as the other Yolande's sometimes had been. He sent her away because she was a Hopkins. Now, out of his reach under the summer sky, she was like a spirit of innocence, of a beauty and purity lost. Other men loved little ones like this—called them their own. It must make a man better. There was a saying—was it from the Bible?—"For I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which—"

The office-bell rang sharply, and the patient who entered immediately after the alarm



found Dr. Grantley as ready as ever for professional duties or for sarcastic witticisms.

That evening Eunice and the deacon sat together in the porch, while Yolande on the lowest step listened to the crickets, or, looking up long and curiously, wondered if the countless little stars were not just golden heads of wheat in some celestial harvest-field; they looked so to her.

"What has the little busybody been doing to-day?" asked her grandfather.

"She left her sun-bonnet on a pole, and the cows maybe would have eaten it, but a boy brought it to Aunt Eunice. I never shall forget it any more," she gravely confessed.

"And where were you when not in the bonnet?" put in her aunt, not having thought to ask before.

Yolande hesitated; then she related her experiences in a quaintly sober way: "I went to visit the man that lives in the big house with hollyhocks down the back garden— No, I went to see the house, and he was in it."

"He? who?" interrupted Eunice, startled out of her usual calmness.

"The bottle-man—his room is all over bottles. He was not very well and glad to see me. I don't like him, and he never wishes anybody's children, nor me either, to come again."

While Eunice was gasping in a sort of dumb dismay, the deacon by a question or two more drew out the whole story.

"He said I could go away, and I did go; and I wanted his blue flowers, but I did not ask him for any; he was too unrespectful. I took him in some pretty 'everybody's flowers' from *my* field, but I brought them out; he did not look as if he wanted any."

The deacon stirred uneasily. Eunice rose up suddenly and shot into the house, not appearing again that evening.

"What makes you so still, grandpa?" asked Yolande, coming after a while to climb on his knee. "Why, it sprinkles!"

He did not tell her it was a tear-drop that had fallen on her chubby hand. He said softly, "I will teach you a verse, dearie, and you'll remember it for grandpa's sake as long as you live, even if you live until your hairs are as white as his. Say it after me now."

So, under the quiet stars, while the crickets made melancholy music, the old man, remembering his lost boy, repeated with Benjamin's child, "Love ye your enemies, and do good, . . . and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil."

## CHAPTER XVI.

"Alas! what a life is this, where tribulation and miseries are never wanting, where all is full of snares and enemies!"

"YES, I do suppose it might freshen me up if I were to take a bit of a play-spell. Yolande and I might as well go to Warrenton with you to-morrow and have done with it."

"I say so too; it is kind of lonesome pottering around a big town all day," returned the deacon, pushing back his dinner-plate, and adding, as he moved toward the cool piazza for his after-dinner nap, "I'd feel safer if you were along with your sharp eyes, daughter, for I've got to draw out every cent of our fifteen hundred dollars, and I don't carry such a sum in my pocket very often. I never did more than two or three times in my life, all told."

"Well, I warrant you won't lose it if I am near by," laughed Eunice, rather excited

at thought of taking a ride of sixty miles by rail. She briskly cleared away the dishes, and then put the house in as neat order as if she expected to be gone six months instead of a day. She was in such excellent spirits that Yolande dared to tease her for a new doll, and was promised one. As Eunice worked that afternoon she made many cheerful calculations. At last the farm was to be their own, for twelve hundred dollars paid to Judge Balcom would free them from debt; then there would be enough left to buy several needed farm-implements. Yes, and Eunice could soon rejoice in such a fall "house-cleaning" as had not for a long time delighted her soul. The sitting-room should be newly papered with light gray—or, no, perhaps with a delicate buff—paper, and she could afford a chintz cover for the lounge and the big rocking-chair. Who knows but she would go so far as to buy a new student's lamp? The deacon would enjoy reading his weekly religious paper by its soft light. Yolande really must have several new dresses; she brought only very shabby ones when she

came, and Eunice had made her none since that were pretty. A bright crimson merino would make her gay as a tropical bird, and Eunice liked to see young things bright and merry, for all her own garb and manner seemed so severe. She never took Yolande in her arms and kissed her, never played with her or held long and lively conversations with her; but already Yolande knew that there were never "doughnuts" fried without a dough man being fashioned for her, never a pie made but she had a "turn-over." Her sticky little biscuits, cut out with a thimble, were allowed to burn on Eunice's clean stove, and almost nothing that gave her harmless pleasure was denied her by this aunt of few words. What wonder that she was happy in her new home!

Next morning Eunice got an early breakfast, and then all made ready for their trip. It was a perfect August day. A thunderstorm had cleared the air, every leaf was vivid green, and light clouds drifted over a radiant sky blue as in June. The deacon, while he cared for the animals' comfort during his absence, sang, "Sweet fields arrayed

in living green," and Eunice answered Yolande's questions almost laughingly, she felt so light-hearted :

"Yes, the doll shall have blue eyes, and open and shut them. Now, tell me, child, will you eat seed-cakes or ginger-snaps or sponge-cake? I want to put you up a lunch; you may be hungry before dinner-time."

"'Pong-cake, 'pong-cake!" cried Yolande; "and here comes Mr. Potter!"

Uncle Zeb was to drive over to the station with the Hopkinses, and there attend to a little business of his own. He stopped at the gate and sang out, "All aboard!" The deacon clambered into a seat after swinging the child up, and they waited a moment for Eunice to lock the door and hide the key under the doorstep.

"How sweet the air is!" said Uncle Zeb; "it's a pleasure jest to breathe on such a day."

"Yes," returned the deacon, letting his eyes wander over the pleasant old homestead, over the fertile fields, the broad pasture-lands, and thinking,

"I am content now if I go hence any

time to a better country. Eunice and Yolande have a home secured. Eunice is getting along—not old yet, to be sure, but of an age to want to feel settled—and poverty has come close enough to my Benjamin's baby in the past."

Eunice was ready at last—in her Sunday black cashmere, and wearing her straw bonnet with one remarkable pink flower on it, which fascinated Yolande, it was so unlike anything that ever grew. Eunice talked more than usual to Mr. Potter, asking advice about their contemplated purchases for the farm, and she did not notice that Uncle Zeb was for him very quiet. Once or twice he opened his lips as if to make some important communication; then he closed them again. He saw the whole party safely on board the train, and as the cars steamed away from the little station he muttered,

"Mebbe I'd oughter told 'em, but what was the use of settin' their nerves all a-quiverin' two hours afore it would be necessary? Anywise, I hope there hain't nothin' in it."

"What do you say, Potter?" asked the ticket-agent, who stood near.



Uncle Zeb replied soberly,

"Why, you see, the old deacon has got some money—I don't know 'zactly how much—in the Warrenton bank. He's been a long time scratchin' it together to pay off a debt on that farm of his'n. He's worked like a man of forty instead of one nigh seventy, and he's gone to-day to draw it all out. I wish to gracious he'd ha' done it sooner, for there's a rumor—I do hope 'tain't nothin' but a lie out o' hull cloth—that Elderedge, the president of the Warrenton bank, committed suicide last night on account of some sudden shock that crazed him: he's been in poor health. Nobody knows anythin' more, even if that is true, but folks are guessin' no end of things to pay; or, rather, they are sayin', 'What if there should be *nothin'* to pay to them as have put their funds there?'"

"Who else has money there?"

"No one from the Corners, that I know of. Judge Balcom used to have considerable in it, but I heerd him say a while ago he did business with the Union Bank now-a-days."

"Well, I hope old Hopkins won't lose a dollar; he's as good as gold, and at his age a big loss would be tough."

"*Tough* wouldn't be no name for it," replied Uncle Zeb, preparing to turn his face homeward.

The deacon and his daughter so seldom traveled that everything pertaining to their brief trip was to them of fresh interest and entertainment. Eunice studied the faces, dresses and manners of the passengers with the naïve curiosity of one who knows very few people, and has long ago observed everything noticeable about those familiar few. The deacon adjusted his spectacles and read sedately a very poor poem handed him by a one-legged peddler; then Yolande gave the peddler a few pennies and kept the deacon busy until the cars ran into the Warrenton station. Eunice washed Yolande's face in the little waiting-room, and drew a whisk brush from her pocket and dusted off the deacon's coat, before she allowed them to consider what was to be done first. The bank was about a mile from the station, and as the streets between were the best

and liveliest of the town, it was finally decided that they should walk leisurely along, seeing the sights, until the bank was reached; their business there transacted, they would have dinner, do the proposed shopping, and then take the train for home. They enjoyed the sights and sounds of the busy thoroughfare, stopping at almost every bazaar, "dollar store" or tempting window. Eunice had a feminine interest in novelties, and so had the deacon, as to that matter. They came once to a full stop before a beautiful assortment of china dishes marked down to a very low figure.

"Why, father," said Eunice, "I didn't suppose a body could get such cups and saucers for any price like that. Ain't they pretty?"

Her unusual enthusiasm was contagious.

"That they be," rejoined the deacon heartily. "And now see here, sis! You were saying you must have Mr. Halsay and some of the neighbors to tea soon: let's just treat ourselves to half a dozen o' them decorated cups and sassers. You could mix 'em in with those ma and I went to housekeepin' with half a hundred years ago this spring."

"I've as good a mind to do it as ever I had to eat," was Eunice's emphatic declaration; "but don't let's be rash. We are coming back this way, and I'll be deciding as we go.—Come, Yolande; the doll can wait too; you don't want to be tugging it around without any clothes on."

"Oh no," assented Yolande, shocked at the mere thought of such impropriety; and they went on. Curious passers stared at the tall spinster in her country attire, and at the lovely child running by the gentle old man; but the father and daughter had no thought that they were not abundantly blessed with all good gifts.

"Well, this is the end of Main Street; now it runs into Temple Lane, and from Temple Lane we turn right into the street where the bank is," said the deacon. "I declare, it's pretty warm walking; let's stop under this elm."

Eunice stayed her steps; Yolande put her face close to a wire fence to admire a neat lawn with a pattering fountain. The old man wiped the glistening beads of perspiration off his forehead, pushed back his

white hair, and, holding his broad-brimmed hat, let the soft breeze cool his face. He looked at the elm tree swaying, then at one great bank of cloud above the town-hall, and then he said simply,

"I suppose fifteen hundred dollars would not seem much to lots of merchants and bankers out there in Main Street, but it means a sight of days' work to us, don't it, Eunice?—ploughing and sowing and reaping for me, and for you no end of woman's work."

"Yes, I would not want to work over again all the butter I've churned, for one thing. But we'd better be moving on, father."

When they turned out of the quiet street just traversed they joined at once a crowd which seemed exceedingly large, even for a city thoroughfare.

"There must be a mass-meeting or a fire," exclaimed Eunice, "for they are all going one way; and see how excited they are ahead there!"

"Yes, but look out for the child, Eunice, or she will get pushed down."



"There is a run on the Bank."

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"Keep close to me.—I wonder if there can be a *strike*? Something unusual is the matter," she returned, seizing Yolande's hand, and at the same time asking an anxious-faced woman near by the cause of the commotion.

"Why, don't you know?" the woman answered. "There is a run on the bank. Last night Elderedge, the president, was found dead in his private office; he had shot himself through the head. Something is wrong, and everybody is drawing out money. I've fought my way since the doors opened this morning, and there's hundreds ahead of me. I'm a widow, and every cent my husband left me is under that roof."

Eunice turned, staring blankly at the old man, who had not heard the woman's words, so careful was he of the little one, who was being jostled here and there. Did this mean— *What* could it mean? She felt at once the common impulse to push, to elbow, to make more rapid progress in the throng. She was not near the bank, but she could see that the steps up to its entrance were packed with excited men and



women. Suddenly there was loud shouting among them, with groans and, lower down, hisses. Policemen began more vigorously to force back the tide; then, far off on the street as she was, Eunice saw that the great iron doors of the bank were being jammed together, shut in the face of the multitude. On every side the tidings came, ominous words, meeting with loud lamentations from all hearers: "Suspended payment"—"Dead broke."

"Elderedge trusted Grayson, and Grayson has been speculating on the grandest scale with the bank funds. Elderedge has been getting old and credulous," said one; and another went on: "Yes, and when he found Grayson had absconded, with nobody knows how much money, he could not stand what he knew was coming, and so he shot himself dead."

"The bank has been mismanaged for months past. I was warned in time," put in the only calm man to be seen in the crowd.

Eunice heard it all as in a dream. She knew it was penetrating her father's duller

ears, for his face was blanching; his eyes were fixed and his under jaw dropped. He let a half-distracted Irish woman thrust him this way and that, while he himself made no further effort to get on.

"Why have they stopped now?" asked Eunice of the calm man, who was nearest her. She did not know her own voice, it was so strange and hollow.

"Because they have no more money to pay out, madam. I doubt if any man, woman or child gets a cent on a dollar of all the money put in that bank."

"Do you *know* anything about it?"

"I know Elderedge never killed himself for a little fizzle; and as for Grayson, why it is all out in the *Morning Chronicle* how he has been throwing money to the dogs with his two country-seats, his yacht, his family in Europe half the time. Why, for every dollar of his own, I presume he has spent a thousand of—*yours* perhaps?"

Eunice had just dignity enough left to retreat, with a vague thought that their loss was not a stranger's affair.

*Their loss!* Could it be possible that

they had no fifteen hundred dollars? Because somebody was dead and some one else had proved a scoundrel were they to have no profit of their long years of toil? As she struggled mentally to grasp the full import of the facts just learned, the crowd, the time, the place, were forgotten. Nothing impressed her but a sudden vivid fancy of her white-haired old father standing before Judge Balcom empty-handed and saying, "I can pay *nothing!* it is all *gone!*"

Yolande at that moment gave a sharp cry of pain, and, tugging at the deacon's coat, wailed,

"Somebody stepped on my foot. Oh dear! it hurts me so!"

Eunice saw him look down in a pitiful, stupefied way, as if he did not comprehend more than that they suffered together—not understanding what pain had come to them separately.

"Come, father, let us get out of the crowd; make your way after me," said Eunice, lifting Yolande in her arms and drawing the old man after her as rapidly as possible. To break off from the multitude and to strike

into a side-street again was not a very difficult task, but as soon as it was accomplished the deacon went only a few paces, and then seated himself on the stone steps of a private mansion.

"Stop, Eunice," he exclaimed hoarsely, "and let us understand it. Do you make out that we can't have our money to-day?"

"Yes," she answered, and was about to add, "maybe we never will have it," when she saw how he was trembling. "There is a panic, and nobody knows anything definitely. We had better go home, and by to-morrow every one will know the truth."

She seated herself by him, mechanically rubbing Yolande's foot. The noon sunshine smote them hotly, but only the child perceived it or thought it made any difference. Eunice could think of nothing to say; she apprehended the worst, so nothing hopeful occurred to her.

"Yes, daughter, we must get home; I can think it out better there. I seem lost," the deacon faltered.

"But you must have a cup of tea; it is dinner-time."

"No, no, not yet. I could at home, perhaps—could eat and pray and not feel so—so bewildered."

"You must not go home without the dolly, Aunt Eunice; you *promised*," protested Yolande, amazed to hear of going back so soon.

Long afterward Eunice wondered that she could have forced herself to leave everything concerning the money unsaid and go on so calmly. She led the way to a street-car, and they rode to the station. She found a quiet corner there, and, bringing the old man tea, she stood over him while he drank it, and then said,

"You sit here, father, until I get back—don't stir; of course I must do for the child what I promised."

"And—Eunice," he said, with a pathetic effort to be brave, "there were other errands, you know—the tea-set; or will that cost—can't we *now*—"

"I will see to everything. I'll do all that is to be done, and—and take care of you. I'm strong, and quite young yet."

Eunice failed in her attempt to smile, but her father understood her and murmured,

"Yes, you are a blessing to the old father."

Yolande pulled her aunt along again through the crowded streets. They passed the pretty tea-cups, the shops that held the various objects which Eunice had expected to purchase, but she gave nothing her attention until they reached the toy-shop, where she bought exactly such a waxen baby as Yolande had been promised, and then they returned to the railroad-station. They had to wait a few moments for a train that would stop at Conesus Corners. Yolande nestled close to her grandfather, and sat quiet. She was awed by his manner. Eunice, her hands folded in her lap, her tall form bolt upright, seemed calmly watching the people gathering in the waiting-room. A fierce tumult was raging under the impassive exterior. Poor Eunice! Never would it be true of her, as it certainly was of the deacon, that she was being "led along a way of peace to a land of everlasting light." She went forward, fighting doubt, encountering forces of evil, throughout her pilgrimage.

*Is God good?* was the black thought, the

angry question, of this hour. It came to her as to thousands before her. If he is kind, is loving, if he does care for us, why *this* blow? The poor father is getting old and feeble; he was so happy to feel the burden slip gently off! Must it come back on the bent shoulders with crushing, sickening weight? must he stagger on under it for ever?

And she herself! Sorrow had taken the sweetness out of her early life, but she had strengthened herself to labor bravely—for what? Again she must suffer for others' evil deeds. The old Bible told how God's love and mercy passed from one generation to another. Its promises were multiplied for the children of the righteous. Now, had not this gray-haired father's life been like a beautiful psalm of praise? Yet where was the mercy in poor wayward Ben's career? and was it infinite *love* that was thus continually embittering all life to her?

An elegantly-dressed woman waiting for a train was pacing back and forth before Eunice. Once in passing she laughed, remarking to a companion,

"Yes, our summer has been gayer than our winter, if that could be possible. We have done nothing but enjoy ourselves."

"By what rule of justice did God let you enjoy so much, and then allow this to come on him?" groaned Eunice inwardly, not trusting herself to glance again at the old man, whose head was bent—in sleep the bystanders fancied.

Like a whisper from some good angel came the words to the tempted, unhappy woman, "Like as a father pitieth his children" (that is, just as her father would pity his own Ben), "so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." She must fall back on the old, old trust, and go by faith through darkness again for a time.

The train came thundering into the station; everybody hastened to get on with boxes, bags or babies. Eunice seized Yolande and aroused her father, who whispered,

"From a long life behind a body surely he may get understanding for the future; and I do know, Eunice, that I love God, and that before this 'all things have worked together for good' to me."



"Be careful where you step," was Eunice's grim retort.

Uncle Zeb was at the Conesus station—a fact at which the Hopkinses did not think to wonder, although they had given him no reason to expect them back so early in the afternoon. He gave a few keen glances into their sober faces, and drew his own conclusions, but asked no questions. He talked to his horses after a fashion of his own as he drove past the corn-fields down the pleasant shaded road. By and by he began to sing in a cheery, deep voice, that had unusual feeling in its tones,

"There's a voice for ever sounding  
In the weary pilgrim's ear—  
Voice of tenderest compassion,  
Framing sweetest words of cheer:  
'Cast on me your heavy burdens,  
Cast on me your load of care;  
I invite you, I entreat you:  
All your burdens I will bear.'"

At the gate Eunice was out over the wheel and into the house before Mr. Potter could get himself to the ground. Not being urged to enter, he only waited for the deacon to alight, then wringing his hand, he said,

"I suspicion the whole thing, brother, but don't give up under it. I'll be around when you've had a chance to get your bear-in's and we'll talk it over in a neighborly way. I only wish I had a pile of my own in some other bank, and this would be the time I'd draw it out to lend."

The deacon pressed his hand and tried to smile, but the very attempt made Uncle Zeb's eyes misty, and he drove away rapidly.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"Occasions of adversity best discover how great virtue or strength each one hath. For occasions do not make a man frail, but they show what he is."

"MY dear brother Potter, you are not practical. Your sympathy for Deacon Hopkins reflects credit on your kind heart: I also am moved to—to—ah! lament over this untoward circumstance, which must result in the loss of his farm."

It was Judge Balcom who spoke thus as he sat before Uncle Zeb one morning. They were in the judge's office, and had been talking earnestly for an hour or more.

"I'd be 'practical' to the tune of twelve hundred dollars, to be lent to the deacon, if I could raise it, judge; but it is about as wife says—we've always fed our critters, paid our debts and been tolerably thankful, but when the years swing 'round we hain't got a dime laid away in a stocking-leg. Now,

judge, it must be different with *you*. Can't you make a shift and not sell out the deacon this time?"

"I have been exceedingly lenient, Mr. Potter, in all time past. I must have ready money, for my son, who is soon to sail, has required a great deal. To be sure, I am not absolutely without other resources, but, in point of fact, I am so just now. My money is tied up in stocks, in Western land, etc. I consider that I do Deacon Hopkins a service in putting him, so to speak, on the retired list; he is too old a man to labor. Eunice must settle him in some simple way of living, and support him in ease. She can do any kind of woman's work, such as tailoring or dressmaking, or she can go out nursing."

"It is like death to 'em both to see the homestead going," murmured Mr. Potter.

"Providence might not have deprived them of it had the old man been clearer-headed and more business-like in other days," returned the judge. "As for Eunice, the Lord doubtless knows *she* needs it; she appears to me stiff-necked. She

must accept it as needed discipline. To some is given prosperity, to others poverty. You must consult a higher Power than my weak judgment if you question the wisdom of such a dispensation."

"I suppose now 'tis easier to be resigned in your position than in the deacon's, isn't it?"

The judge gazed at Uncle Zeb in reproachful dignity as he quoted from his favorite book of Ecclesiastes: "'Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this also is *the gift of God.*' I regret, Mr. Potter, as deeply perhaps as you may, that the Lord has not seen fit to prosper Deacon Hopkins."

"And I was not reflectin' on the Lord; I was only a-turnin' on it over in my own mind, judge, if there wasn't a prime chance for us to carry out the New-Testament injunction to 'bear one another's burdens.'"

"Certainly we must be very diligent in carrying all the consolations of the gospel to those who are heavy-laden."

Uncle Zeb forgot himself, and in sudden heat exclaimed,

"Oh, land of Goshen! Judge, that day the black colt run away with *you*, dashed *you* overboard, and left a thundering big butter-tub resting on *your* stomach, I mind me well the very fust thing you wanted of me as a neighbor was to roll it off and help you onto your pegs again."

The judge did not seem to see any relevancy in this remark. He merely reflected that Mr. Potter in his conversation made strange confusion with things carnal and things spiritual. At the same time, he unrolled a quantity of legal documents and prepared for his morning's work.

Uncle Zeb arose, and, searching under the chair for his old straw hat, said nervously,

"Then you are resolved to sell the Hopkins farm unless the deacon can raise the money to pay? He says he can't noways do it."

"As matters stand," returned the judge calmly, "I am forced to be more just than generous. The deacon ought to have in-

formed himself before it was too late in regard to the First Bank. I removed my money from there a twelvemonth ago. As Solomon says, 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.' Good-morning, Mr. Potter."

If Uncle Zeb had not had infinitely more faith in Christ than he had in Christians, he would have gone away with the idea that the judge was an old Pharisee—nothing more, nothing less. As it was, he only moved slowly down the street, whistling a melancholy tune, until he came opposite Dr. Grantley's office. Seeing the door open, he acted on the impulse to go in.

"Walk right in, old fellow," cried the doctor, who sat at his table putting up powders. If Mr. Potter *would* come, he should not fancy Dr. Grantley ever considered his visits in any serious light. "Make yourself at home—take a pill or blister or a plaster, as you please. Or did you come for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness?"

"Why, now, Dr. Grantley, if I had come

for this 'ere last, 'twouldn't avail much," returned Mr. Potter, dropping into a big leathern chair as he added in a pleasant drawl, "for your very words show that 'from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee *wise unto salvation*, through faith which is in *Christ Jesus*;' and what the word of the Lord has not done, how can old Zeb Potter hope to accomplish?"

The doctor folded powders a while silently; then he said carelessly, pushing them aside, "So that pious old Presbyterian figure-head has lost his bottom dollar? If he was a sinner it would be a pity, but of course he don't count anything a treasure that is not laid up in heaven, so it doesn't matter."

Mr. Potter was not stirred to the least indignation. Perhaps he knew that was expected of him, for he only returned,

"No, it does not take anything good out of his heart, but it is like a big stone dropped on his feet; poor tired old feet they be too, that have followed the Lord over many a thorny road."



There was a harder rasp in the doctor's voice as he retorted,

"But if he believes what he professes to hold true, he ought to be thankful for his troubles. Come now, Uncle Zeb, own up if there is not real nonsense and trickery in the way you pious fellows salve over a Christian's tribulations, and lay down the law when a reprobate gets into hot water. I believe that loss and sorrow and all that come like lightning and measles—'hit or miss, amen!' as the Methodist darkey said. But you goody chaps roll up the whites of your eyes over an affair like this of the deacon's and say, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' If *I* had lost that money you never would have clapped that text on to me. Oh no; then it would be—let me see—'Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him,' or something of that sort. Now, Uncle Zeb, what makes a catastrophe like this a blessing in disguise to Deacon Hopkins? And if it is one, why was not the loss of my black mare Nancy one too? The express-train, you know, hit my sulky last year, knocked me head over heels, and kill-

ed poor Nance as dead as a door-nail. I never heard a mortal say it would be 'sanctified to me,' but they all whine in this way about the deacon's lost money. Money is as material a thing as horseflesh. What is the difference in the two cases?"

"I don't exactly see what you are tryin' to make out. The pint ain't as to the difference betwixt and between one sort of trouble and another. It is jest here. What has your trouble done for you, and what has it done for the other man? There is where the blessing comes in. Whenever you talked about that accident that killed your mare you used to swear until the very air smelt of brimstone; I've heerd you do it. I didn't claim to be very scrup'lous myself about those days, but I did wonder any man could let out such a temper and be so awful profane over something nobody but himself was to blame for, after all. What it did for you was to stir up all the ugly in you and let it ferment and sizzle. But what trouble has done afore this for the deacon we all on us have seen. He lost a boy, the very light of his eyes; mebbe he wasn't so proud of

him as Judge Balcom is of Herbert, but he loved him every whit as well. Ben was led into wicked ways and cut off very sudden, but what did his loss do for his father? Why, there ain't a young feller at the Corners that the tender-hearted old man isn't tryin' to help along the good way, and the wilder they be the more his tremblin' old fingers are reachin' out arter them."

The doctor fumbled in his coat for a pocket-case, laid the powders in it, then, leaning back in his chair, said in a tone somewhat softer,

"It is of course hard for any man to lose all his earnings, but I presume Judge Balcom will be very easy with him."

Now, the doctor did *not* "presume" anything of the kind, but Uncle Zeb, being in such a sympathetic mood himself, fell into the snare set for him, and sighed,

"I fear he won't; he says he must sell him out."

"What! you don't mean Balcom will do that to an old man who has been his neighbor for almost half a century? Why, Uncle Zeb, you forget that the judge is a *Christian*! I would not do that."

Mr. Potter's face lengthened; he wiped his forehead with his red silk handkerchief, and soberly studied a skull that adorned one of the doctor's bookcases.

"Now, you see, Uncle Zeb, that all the judge's pious pretensions are pure hypocrisy. He declares that he is a Christian, he declares that Christians love their neighbors as themselves: what ails the *Christian* of him in this particular little affair?"

"What is the 'Christian' of anybody, doctor?"

"I give it up."

"Well, I don't know much about theology, but I reckon it is the amount of God's love we have in our hearts, and the power it has working out in our wheat-threshing, produce-selling or powder-dosing, as the case may be."

"Then, I take it, there can't be very much pressure to the square inch in Balcom's case, or have you some other theory to fit him?"

"What we all lack is enough love," returned Uncle Zeb soberly, "and that love is just another name for the Holy Spirit. It comes to us from above, and we don't create

it for ourselves from within. A man without it is, as I heerd somebody say once, like *cold* iron ; but let heat get into that iron, let love get into the man, and the blackness, the coldness, the hardness, will go. There is many a Christian that is like *warm* iron, just warm enough to show that heat has touched it ; but the iron needs much more before it will bend or melt or give out a glow to any but the person or thing it touches."

"There is no opportunity for a lay-preacher to show his ability among the orderly Presbyterians, Uncle Zeb ; you ought to have joined the Methodists, and then your light would not have been put under a bushel. You ought to apply yourself to warming up the judge gradually—give him the benefit of daily contact with yourself. You waste your energies on me, I fear."

"I am going now," said Mr. Potter, rising with a certain quiet dignity that impressed the doctor and made him aware of his own rudeness.

"Don't go for anything I have said ; I did not mean, 'Give me any less of Potter,'

but, 'Give the judge more.' You and I are old friends; I let you say what you please to me, and I take a like liberty with you."

"Yes, yes, doctor. You hain't any personal influence with the judge, have you? you couldn't talk him around?"

"No; the judge is nothing to me, nor the deacon either."

"Why, his Ben and you used to be great cronies; I heerd his father say in old times that you could do 'most anything with Ben. But I must poke along; I promised mother to put her up a new clothes-line. Now harvesting is about over, I ain't so driv' with farm-work. Good-morning."

Uncle Zeb, as he shut the Grantley gate, looked sorrowfully toward the Hopkins homestead and sighed:

"'Tain't no use. Saint and sinner,—they all seem to quote Scripeter to suit their purpose, and they clutch their pocket-books with the same tight grip. The Lord, and not Zeb Potter, will have to soften their hearts if anything of that natur' is to take place."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"If thy heart were sincere and upright, then every creature would be unto thee a living mirror and a book of holy doctrine."

MRS. TIBBITS'S life about this time was a series of surprises at that which to an outsider would have seemed a very trivial matter. But straws did indeed show that there was a change in the current of affairs in Dr. Grantley's household. The new aspect of things began about the time that Helen's lessons were well under way. She was so eager to learn, so quick to comprehend, that it was pleasant for the doctor to teach her and to mark her rapid assimilation of knowledge. He began to recognize her individuality, to be interested in reading her tastes, peculiarities—in short, her distinctive traits of character; and no sooner did he do this than he treated her more as he treated his patients—respectfully, if not ceremoniously. He sometimes spoke to her at the

table, and if she asked him a question he answered her fully and civilly. At first, Helen, while in his presence, felt like one standing before a loaded cannon likely to be discharged at any moment, but soon a delightful sense of liberty was realized. One by one, she opened the rooms so long shut up and let in the sunshine; nobody protested. So, while Mrs. Tibbits trembled and prophesied some terrible outburst, Helen made the house more pleasant, almost homelike. There was for her a new and fascinating excitement in seeing how far she might venture to act, to talk, to dress as other girls were accustomed to do in their own homes; but, above all, it was interesting to find that behind his sarcasm and indifference the doctor was "something like other men."

Occasionally, after her lessons were recited, Dr. Grantley would detain her for a while, asking what she heard at Sunday-school that was "new and startling," idly questioning her about the books she had read or of her new acquaintances among the young girls, or what she thought of Mr. Halsay, whom he had never met. It



came to her one rainy day that this man was lonely—that after persistently shutting every one out of his home-life he was now reaching out after human sympathy. She mistook, as warm-hearted, somewhat romantic girls often mistake, the state of another's mind, but perhaps her interpretation of his thoughts and conduct was on the whole fortunate. It softened her heart, and made her set to work to be more unselfish—to make some one outside herself happier. From that day when, looking back into his office, she saw him lean his head on his hand in a tired, melancholy attitude, she tried to treat him with more deference, to study his wishes and to carry them out in all details of household or educational matters. That from almost hating him she had come to pitying him, Dr. Grantley never once imagined. He did not care how she regarded him; what he was doing and allowing her to do was prompted by no motive save a vague wish to divert his own mind and to keep himself from regretting the past. The visit Yolande made him had shaken him to a degree he would have believed impossible.

She had with her tiny hand opened a door through which trooped shadowy spectres of past sins. They had not gone out with her into the sunshine, but seemed for ever lurking in his sombre room, awaiting his moments of leisure to harass him. More than once he turned his horse's head and drove a roundabout way to avoid meeting the white-haired old grandfather and the child dancing at his side. *Benjamin's child* it always was to Dr. Grantley, as to the deacon. The love he had borne the child's mother was only a faint, sad memory compared with the remorse with which he recalled Ben's blasted life. He said to himself frequently that he wished he might never again hear the name of Hopkins, yet he kept himself informed of much that related to the deacon, to Eunice and to little Yolande.

Uncle Zeb Potter was the only unprofessional caller whom Dr. Grantley ever entertained. Perhaps it is too much to say that he did willingly play host when the old man deliberately strolled into his office for a call that was sure to result in some con-

versation of a personal nature; but Uncle Zeb came all the same, and the doctor could not be more sarcastic than the old man could be plain-spoken. With the rest of the community the doctor felt himself at odds, and was never quite at ease among his townspeople unless he dealt with them in their seasons of illness. The most respectable classes were made up of church-members and their families; with these he had no sympathy. There were no "free-thinkers" at the Corners, except those so low and openly vicious that the doctor would have scorned to have chosen them for associates. His profession alone kept him from becoming a misanthrope without interest in any one but himself. That a human being was good or bad seemed never to concern him in the least, but that he was well or ill was a matter of some importance in his opinion; so whatever any one said of Dr. Grantley as a neighbor, all agreed that he was an excellent physician.

One afternoon in August the doctor, returning from a country drive, found on his slate a call to Maria Wells. He turned

the slate over after reading its contents, and held it thoughtfully. He had not been called to see Maria for years. He well remembered the day when he went with a physician from the city to examine her case. It was in the first year of his practice, and he had done little more than accompany the older doctor, who had pronounced her doomed to lifelong invalidism. He had been sorry for the bright girl who *would* know the truth, and who was so shocked by it. He attended her a little while after that; then her mother dismissed him rather coolly. He supposed at the time that they were poor and feared to run up a large bill. Later, when he learned of their employing another physician, he thought they might have heard of some of his wild deeds and preferred a steadier man; in this conjecture he was not deceived. For several years he had not known anything about Maria beyond the fact that, while she had not recovered her health, she had called in no other doctor.

"She probably concluded that 'physicians were in vain,' and it was wise for her to grin and bear it without any expense," he mut-

tered to himself as he put on his hat again. "Or, more likely, she has grumbled and borne it, so that the pretty broken-backed girl of fifteen is a faded, cross and tedious old maid. Or, let me see: was it her back? I have really forgotten now how she was injured."

He entered the cottage-gate, and, lifting the old brass knocker on the front-door, rapped loudly. A clear and pleasant voice called,

"Come in!"

Maria's room was always bright with fresh flowers and tasteful objects, making it cheery, but Maria herself was the sweetest sight that met the eye of the comer. Her fair face was still girlish at twenty-five, for suffering had only refined it, while in that peaceful retreat no passions or struggles, no impress of the hurry and worry of life outside, had left rough marks on her countenance. Only the great brown eyes told the story never whispered by the child-like, smiling mouth—that sometimes the stricken woman, remembering her youth and its vanished brightness, made to herself the sad lament,

“My inner being  
*Reasons and knows* that all is for the best ;  
But, oh ! the unstilled yearning in my breast  
As my soul's eyes turn ever backward, seeing  
The *vanished* self that evermore must be,  
This side of what we call eternity,  
Not quite the same.”

On coming into her presence Dr. Grantley stood a moment as if bewildered, and Maria herself did not recognize him at once, he had grown so much older, graver and darker than the beardless young man she had formerly known ; but soon she exclaimed, with a smile of amusement,

“It is you, Dr. Grantley ! Will you please find yourself a seat ? Mother has gone to one of the neighbor's, and left me to play housekeeper. We did not expect you so promptly, for your niece said you would not return from the country before dark.”

“My niece ?” he echoed, a little confused by the unfamiliar words.

“I mean Helen ; perhaps she is not your niece, but your cousin ; I only know she is a Grantley and in your care.”

“Yes, she is a Grantley,” returned the

doctor, taking a seat as he added, "I have not had much care of her, however; like Topsy, she has 'growed.'"

"But now you are teaching her regularly, and she is so much happier than she was. You wonder how I know that? I guessed it in the few times I have seen her. I never saw any one so eager to learn more, to make more of herself. I think you are doing a wise, kind thing to help her to an education."

"She is not very demonstrative; you must have quickly found her out," said the doctor, thinking not of Helen, but of Maria herself. How had she kept so fresh, so free from sick-room tones and doleful ways? In a lighter mood than usual he said, smiling, "Have you sent for me, Miss Wells, to confess that you have been making-believe ill all this time? If you have not, I cannot account for your looking so bright and well. One would think you had been enjoying yourself as a steady occupation."

"Well, I am not sure that I have not been doing just that," she answered.

"You have had leisure to read, for one

thing," and the doctor scanned curiously the titles of the volumes on a shelf near him, "and you have made your prison-house very bright and pretty."

"Others have done that for me, and it does add to my happiness. It must be dreadful to lie still day after day and see only bare walls and ugly articles. I found a little poem not long ago that might have been written for me. Shall I read it to you?"

Without waiting for an answer, she found it in a willow workbox close by her on the window-sill, and read it most musically:

"This is the place that I love the best:  
A little brown house like a ground-bird's nest,  
Hid among grasses and vines and trees,  
Summer retreat of the birds and the bees.

"The tenderest light that ever was seen  
Lifts through the vine-made window-screen—  
Lifts and quivers and flits and falls  
On home-made carpets and gray-hung walls.

"All through June the west wind free  
The breath of the clover brings to me;  
All through the languid July day  
I catch the scent of the new-mown hay.

"The morning-glories and scarlet vine  
Over the doorway twist and twine;  
And every day, when the house is still,  
The humming-bird comes to the window-sill."



"There is more of it, but you can see how one learns to make much of little sights and sounds that busy people cannot stop to find so pleasant."

"It is all according to the law of compensation; but did you always take so kindly to a life of confinement?"

The doctor asked the question more to carry on conversation than from a desire to learn the truth. The answer was earnest, and impressed him:

"Do you remember the day Dr. Cradock told me I was incurable? If he had swung back the door of a vault without air or light and said, 'Go in there and stay until death,' it seemed to me that would have been infinitely better; for, entering, I should have known my life could not be long, however terrible its gloom and deprivation. *Now* it seems to me quite different."

"Yes, one gets used to everything. As the prisoner said, 'My very chains and I grew friends,'" remarked the doctor.

She looked at him as if she were wondering if his words did describe her experience; then she said:

"It is like this: Once my father took me to a city. I had the most brilliant fancies of the pleasure I was to have there. Late one afternoon, while on the journey, he put me in a cold, dark station and left me waiting. I must stay until he came back, and it seemed to me he delayed his return; but I was not at all unhappy. My father knew he must put me there, and I was *on the way* to something far better. It is so with me now."

"Then you expect to get well?" The doctor said it almost brutally. He knew well enough what she meant, but he was not going to let her indulge in any "pious affectation." She had read poetry to him, and he had allowed himself to make that poem into a mental picture. He was even now, as the western sunshine smote her dark hair and brightened her delicate face, likening her to one of Murillo's Marys, youthful yet mature, serene but suggesting sorrow.

He was ashamed when she looked quickly out of the window to hide the tears that rushed into her eyes, while she answered him quietly,

"I expect to grow old within these four walls."

The gate shut with a clang, a quick step came up the walk outside the house, and a moment after Mrs. Wells appeared. She was a brisk, good-looking woman of middle age, and began to talk as soon as she perceived the doctor:

"Oh, you are here already? Well, I hope you will make a thorough examination of Maria's case. I have just waked up to the fact that she has been very strangely affected for the past year. She is a great deal stronger, and yet she suffers more pain. She has sat up on her couch lately half an hour at a time.—Haven't you, Maria?"

Dr. Grantley turned to the daughter, but Mrs. Wells, once fairly under way, must say her say out:

"We have not had a doctor in the house for five years, because there did not seem to be any use in calling one. Maria was always the same, and the last doctor told us just how she would probably go on; but now she has taken a turn: either she is better or worse, and, for the life of me, I

can't tell which it is, and she don't appear to care. When she gave up all hope I suppose she just let it go once for all. But I said to her this morning, 'Maria, it won't do any hurt, certainly, to get Dr. Grantley's opinion, if only to satisfy my curiosity as to this and that queer symptom that you never had before this year, to my knowledge; and I said, 'Mari—'

"And you sent for me, and here I am," put in the doctor in his promptest tone. "Let us look into the case at once."

He turned to the sick girl, stayed the tide of her mother's eloquence as much as was possible, and began a long and detailed examination.

As a physician he was interested in studying the case, but at the outset he had no idea that she was otherwise than incurable. Nevertheless, as he proceeded he experienced a succession of surprises. For a time he paid no attention to Mrs. Wells's repeated "What do you think, doctor?"—"Give us your opinion—do, Dr. Grantley." He merely ignored her presence, and questioned carefully her daughter.

At last he said, very coolly,

"I am glad you sent for me. Miss Maria should not be unduly elated by a crumb of encouragement at this late day, so I may say candidly that I do not see *why* her case is hopeless. She could never be a strong woman, but she may yet be able to stand on her feet. A long course of treatment might have prevented this, but, having been let alone, Nature has worked out slowly some results not to have been expected, and, which, all things considered, are astonishing. A change has indeed been going on, and she is stronger; the pain I can easily account for. I want this case.—May I take you in charge, Miss Wells, for six months? I will not make you worse—I promise you that—and I may be able to help you."

Catching a look of hesitation, a mute question that passed from one woman to the other, he added frankly,

"The case is exceedingly interesting to me, and my charges will not be large."

Then, before he could be answered, Dr. Grantley, with the tact he knew how to exercise when he had a motive thereto, began

conversation on a new line, and soon rose to go. The evening shadows had come in so fast that he could not see Maria's face, but her voice trembled and was very sweet when she bade him good-night.

As he walked home he reflected:

"They must be poor, but that girl would make a hovel refined with her presence. *Pious* too! but she ought to be, poor thing! If she can't have anything of earth, who would wish to take away her pretty fancies of heaven? I never saw just such a child-like woman. It comes of her being shut up to prayer and poetry, I presume. If she had had strength enough to gad the town over every day, she would have talked gossip with as glib a tongue as the old lady.—Here, Tibbits!" he roared, having opened his own house-door, "why, in the name of common sense, don't you light this hall-lamp, and not leave me to graze my shins whenever I come in at night?"

Mrs. Tibbits came quaking, and broke six matches in her haste to shed light on the doctor's pathway.

That same evening, after tea, Mr. Halsay

called. Mrs. Tibbits ushered him into the sitting-room, where the doctor was reading a newspaper; then she retreated over the threshold as if she expected an immediate personal encounter between the two men. The minister introduced himself without manifesting the least terror, and when Helen came in soon after she interrupted a discussion only warlike in that it related to the British army and some of its late exploits. The minister stayed half an hour, and during that time Dr. Grantley treated him as one gentleman should treat another. A patient in the office called him out of the room a little while before Mr. Halsay left the house, and then Helen talked with the minister of her studies, of Miss Eunice's Bible-class, and of Maria Wells, on whom he had lately made a pastoral call.

Mrs. Tibbits, too nervous to remain in the doctor's presence, slipped into the room as the latter went to the office, and she was exceedingly sociable. She asked Mr. Halsay no end of questions, and chatted on about church-matters in a way which he found amusing if not edifying:

"You won't really see what Conesus Corners folks can do when they set out to do something fine until cold weather comes; then, if I do say it, they can't be beat for getting up genteel entertainments that nobody can complain of, like reading-clubs, spelling-down bees and magic-lantern evenings. Last winter Bell Haton got up some private *tabloos* in their parlors, though I heard Eunice Hopkins didn't approve of *them*; I'm sure I don't know why, for they was mostly scenes from the life of Moses—one of 'em something about his going to a fair and fetchin' home a gross of green spectacles. Now, I never knew before there was such a thing in the Bible; so, if it set young folks to studying the Scriptures, the Hopkinses needn't have been so particular, 'seems to me."

The minister caught the gleam in Helen's eyes, giving her a glance that said, "You tell her by and by; I don't want to mortify her," then he rose to go.

Dr. Grantley made no subsequent allusion to that call, and no one would have thought it of much importance but for Mrs. Tibbits.



Many times in the next six months she discoursed after this fashion :

“ You may say what you like, but the doctor has behaved ten times more like a gentleman since that night the minister called on him. He ain't so rough in his speech. Why, even his patients notice it. I was asking Mrs. Wells how Maria was, and she, in telling me, happened to say they found the doctor so much more civilized than they expected him to be. Not that she put it just that way, but that was the sum and substance of what she meant.”

“ Nobody could be rude to Maria,” returned Helen ; adding, “ I don't understand how a mere formal call could have such an effect. Mr. Halsay said nothing to the doctor about morals or manners ; but it is true that from about that time a change for the better has come over him. He is as near being polite sometimes as I can imagine him to be under the most favorable conditions.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

"Grace ascribeth no good to herself, nor doth she arrogantly presume; she contendeth not, nor preferreth her own opinion before others."

ANY one might have known, from the general aspect of things at Conesus Corners, that it was Sunday morning, even if the three church-bells had not been ringing so harmoniously. There was no sound of labor in the harvest-fields. The cattle gathered under the shade or stood with the cool water of the creek rippling around their feet. People, as they strolled through the grass-grown streets of the little village, had time to greet one another on the way to church, and they took the time (if they loved such things) to watch the birds or the butterflies or tall thistles—to enjoy the hum of bees or to look over fences at their neighbors' gardens.

In the old Hopkins home everything was

as neat, as orderly, as usual, but there was a deeper shade to the Sabbath solemnity. Little Yolande felt it in various simple ways. The deacon forgot to fill Eunice's old-fashioned purple and bronze pitcher with garden flowers and to set it on the breakfast-table, as he had done on other Sundays. He did not talk about the chapter at prayers, but read it in a slow, labored way, as if he had mislaid his spectacles and his eyes were dim. Eunice dressed the child without one of the common injunctions "not to get a speck of dirt" on her clean attire, and between father and daughter scarcely a word was exchanged. When the church-bell began to ring the little girl exclaimed in surprise,

"Why, Aunt Eunice has not got herself ready!"

The deacon, who had put on his broad-brimmed hat and taken his knotty stick in his hand, glanced up at Eunice's every-day calico and asked sadly,

"What! *not* going to church?"

"There may be a great many times for me to spend Sunday in our old meeting-

house, but"—she swallowed something in her throat—adding gruffly, "not many more *here.*"

Turning, she went swiftly out of sight into the bedroom where one Sunday, twenty years before, her mother had in dying given to her a blessing and the charge of careless little Ben. She had not come out when the old man and Yolande joined the procession winding down the hill to the church.

The Rev. Justus Halsay was, in the opinion of most of his parishioners, "wearing well;" but Judge Balcom was getting somewhat disaffected toward his pastor. He was too much addicted to what the judge called "giving Bible-readings." More than once, instead of taking a text as a starting-point, and then going whither he would in an orderly disquisition, Mr. Halsay had read a Gospel story of Christ and his disciples, and made it, as Uncle Zeb said, "seem for all the world as if Peter and John was actually *folks.*" Such doings pleased many of the oldest and the youngest in the congregation, and interested several hitherto dull outsiders. The judge himself admitted that "within

proper limitations it was wise to tell the sick, the dying, those in affliction or any who might be worsted in the battle of life,—to tell them tenderly and patiently about that One who was himself ‘a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ yet who came among men that he might bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to Satan’s captives and be throughout all time a Saviour, a Redeemer. *But*”—and the judge pronounced this word with judicial emphasis —“there were even at the Corners minds able and eager to grapple with the intellectual questions of the age; they needed to be equipped for strife. To such keen-questioning intellects Mr. Halsay ought to bring suggestive statements. They needed to know what was astir in the skeptical world—what was the newest phase of German rationalism, for instance; in short, it was necessary to keep abreast with the advanced thought of the century.” Now, Mr. Halsay had been at Conesus Corners a whole summer, and for all the information he had given such people as Mr. Potter and Deacon Hopkins about Strauss or Renan or Darwin or Hux-

ley, there might never have been such thinkers and writers on the face of the earth.

In point of fact, the judge was exactly like the grumbler who declared his minister was paid "for knowing Greek and Hebrew, and the congregation ought to have a little of both, even if they did not understand it."

Now, on this particular Sunday morning the judge was not feeling his best. He had been suffering under an attack of dyspepsia, for one thing. He had, moreover, heard expressed during the week just gone what he considered a really exaggerated sympathy for Deacon Hopkins, and along with this sympathy an undue freedom in discussing his own personal and private relations with the old man. The judge thought of himself, in a respectful, expansive manner, as an incarnation of the law, and his theory was that the law could do no wrong. It might be severe, it must be just; meanwhile, he wished "people would mind their own business," and all the way to church he was saying this to himself.

Herbert accompanied him, looking as

brave and bright as a young prince just coming into his inheritance.

The judge found two shabby little Sunday-school scholars nestled cozily into his church-pew, and hustled them out rather peremptorily before he established himself there to wipe his gold spectacles, and, mounting them on his Roman nose, to gaze searchingly about the congregation.

The little church was well filled that day, and Mr. Halsay's opening services were very earnest and heartfelt. The deacon leaned against *his* pillar, worn by forty years' contact with his shoulder, and sang brokenly, his soul full of mingled emotions,

'One there is above all others  
Well deserves the name of Friend.'

Now, Mr. Halsay had been out of town nearly all the week, and had heard none of the talk about the deacon and the judge. He had learned casually that the old man had lost money by a bank-failure, but as to how much or what that loss signified he had no idea. The sermon he had selected for the morning was not a new one, because his

usual study-hours had been sacrificed to a call of duty outside the parish. It was therefore without a thought of preaching *at* any one individual that Mr. Halsay, after reading the story of the Good Samaritan, gave out for his text the *lawyer's* question: "*Who is my neighbor?*" It was precisely such a sermon as must be preached from that text, unless the obvious meaning of the great Teacher's words are to be set aside and some far-fetched application of the simple narrative undertaken. During the first half of the discourse perhaps not more than three people in the congregation thought of the deacon and the judge, although Uncle Zeb did secretly hope the heart of the latter was being touched by the lesson of kindliness, of Christian helpfulness. When the priest and the Levite came in for a share of attention some remarks on hard-heartedness caused several hearers to touch their neighbors' elbows; others smiled approvingly at Sidney Smith's quoted speech that "there would be many more good Samaritans if it were not for the cost of the oil and the twopence." On went Mr. Halsay, his own face beaming



with enthusiasm over the beauty of Christian love and charity.

The judge's face grew pink, grew red, grew almost purple. His right boot began tapping the footstool like a trip-hammer. Suddenly his gold glasses came off, he stiffened himself erect, to the amazement of most of the audience, and then with a mien intended to be both wrathful and majestic, with a step that was undeniably noisy, Judge Balcom strode down the central aisle and slammed the sanctuary-door behind him.

A gasp of awed surprise on the part of the people was followed by a quick glance at the preacher. Would he be able to stand up under such a shock? He certainly was capable of sustaining it; furthermore, he looked after the judge at first curiously, then with a passing apprehensive interest; evidently he fancied the irate brother had been taken ill. He finished his sermon, prayed as one talking reverently to his God and Father, and gave out the closing hymn:

"How blest the tie that binds  
Our hearts in sacred love!  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above."

While the hymn was being sung the judge was plunging down the street, charging as he went an imaginary jury who resembled the church trustees. What he said to them might be condensed into a sentence: It was the opinion of the court that "Conesus Corners had heard enough from the Rev. Justus Halsay." The sooner he was despatched to a new field of operations the better.

## CHAPTER XX.

"For the little strength which is left is like a spark left in ashes. The spark is natural reason, which is enveloped in darkness, having still the power of discerning good and evil and the difference between truth and falsehood, while it is impotent to perform that which it approves, and possesses neither the full light of truth nor the power over its own affections."

YES, Dr. Grantley had become outwardly less rude and careless since he had come to know Maria Wells. She was a helpless woman, ignorant of the world, living a life as unlike his as one life can be unlike another; yet he liked to visit her in that home so peaceful; he liked to think of her as he took long, solitary drives through the country. Her image was with him in his moody hours as the reflection of some pure, bright evening star may be in a pool far, far below it. The pool may be impure, but it reflects a faithful image of the loveliness so foreign to its own nature.

One morning, after he had known her

about a month, he came out of the cottage and started on his daily round of duties. He had gone about a half mile when he came to a little stream. Bordering it on each side, and reaching out to the road and back into the meadow, were innumerable spikes of golden-rod, and growing close beside them as many soft purple asters. He remembered hearing Maria say to her mother the day before, "Now is the time when all the roadsides and hedges are so beautiful; you must get me golden-rod and asters when you go again for a walk."

"I might get a bunch and turn back and take them to her," thought the doctor, springing out by the pretty creek in the morning sunshine. "I never saw any beauty in them before. If, years ago, I had had a sister, or if my mother had lived, I might have been a man of finer grain. If Yolande had married me—I don't know—she was good, but she did not," he muttered, as, standing alone, his hands full of blossoms, a quick realization of his past came upon him. What had he to do with pretty gifts of flowers, with new friendships, with praying Christian women?

He dashed the golden-rod into the stream, and in a moment more was driving rapidly down the road. Suddenly he wheeled about; he had forgotten an instrument he would certainly need.

He passed Uncle Zeb, but he would not look at him. The old man was foolishly kind to his animals, so the Evil One whispered to the doctor,

"Give fiery Tom one extra lash of your whip, just to make old Potter wince."

The whip cracked; the horse went like the wind; the doctor's office was in plain sight; there was no fear of his running into any team in these quiet streets. But, alas! a little figure in a white sun-bonnet darted out from a hedge, tiny hands outstretched, chasing a butterfly. In a second she was under Tom's heels, but the doctor, with a yell of warning, was holding him rearing in the air. Just quick enough he was to keep the child from being crushed, but not soon enough to prevent the catastrophe. Like a little bundle she was kicked to one side—flung into the soft grass, where she lay motionless. The doctor was on his feet by the

child almost with one leap, and had her in his arms. The sun-bonnet fell off, the eyes were covered, but the yellow-brown hair—The face was little Yolande's. The man's face was as white as the child's; a great groan escaped him, with the words,

"Ben's child again! What if I have killed *her*?"

No one saw the accident; no one was in sight while Dr. Grantley's skillful hand felt heart, pulse and limbs. A little color was returning to her lips, when, gathering her carefully in his arms, he walked fast toward Deacon Hopkins's open kitchen-door. As he crossed the threshold Eunice looked up and let fall a platter, breaking it to atoms.

"She is *not* dead. Show me a bed, quick, and help undress her; I think her leg is broken."

"How did it hap—" stammered Eunice, half stupefied for the moment.

"I was driving fast; she ran out suddenly, and my horse kicked."

With a cry like a wild animal Eunice sprang on him, and would have wrenched Yolande from his arms. She was beside

herself with the thought that this was the man who shot Ben, the cruel neighbor who hated them—who had now not spared even Ben's helpless little one.

"Let her alone. Show me a lounge or a bed," he demanded fiercely.

"There—put her down there. Don't you touch her!" shrieked Eunice, utterly forgetful that Grantley was a doctor. "Must you murder my brother and break my father's heart? Must you make my life wretched, and then kill our precious little Yolande—Ben's own baby?" she wailed, wringing her hands in despair.

The doctor's voice was all at once low and firm :

"Miss Hopkins, help me or stand on one side."

He had the child on the bed and was undressing it as he added,

"The right leg is broken ; there is no other surgeon within ten miles, so stop your noise and help me, or call in some of the neighbors."

Eunice saw how suddenly tender he was to Yolande, who, opening her eyes, began to

moan. Coming to her senses, Eunice brought everything required for setting the broken bone. To do this she had to leave him with the little girl while she rushed over to his office and found splints, bandages and ether just where he told her they would be. In her absence he soothed Yolande as best he could, and hoped from the bottom of his heart that Eunice would not call the deacon. He could endure the woman's anger and hatred (for it was hatred he saw in Eunice's eyes), but he shrank from seeing the old man bow his white head under a new trouble.

How still the kitchen was but for the child's sobbing moan! Not a chair in it seemed to have been moved since that day, twenty years before, when Ben and he (mischievous boys together) stopped the old-fashioned clock and examined its works. It would indeed seem strange to the Hopkinses to break up the long-established order of time out of mind.

"I want grandpa—grandpa, not *you*," cried Yolande.

The doctor, being alone, let his voice sound as pitiful as it would:



"My horse hurt you, little one, but I am very sorry for you. Grandpa can't help you as I can when Aunt Eunice gets back. You don't want him to see you in such pain now, do you, poor old man?"

"No, if you can stop the pain."

"After a little. You will be quiet a few—days; then you can run around as well as ever."

Eunice burst in just then, and obeyed every order given her, standing close by the doctor, helping efficiently, yet with set teeth and eyes that frightened Yolande when once she looked up before the anæsthetic took effect.

Judging from his past experiences, Dr. Grantley expected that every woman in the neighborhood would in a minute appear on the scene, but Eunice had not even aroused Helen or Mrs. Tibbits. What was to be done was done by this man and woman so repugnant to one another. When all was over, and Yolande, with her white cheeks against the pillow, looked like a crushed lily, the doctor gave full instructions as to her nursing and treatment. Eunice listened

in grim silence. When he ended she asked sternly,

"You know, do you, that the leg is all right for the present?"

"No surgeon could do any better; it is a simple fracture; there will be no trouble."

He meant to reassure her with the truth, but she believed him to have neither heart nor conscience—nothing but possible skill in his profession.

"Very well, then; I will follow your directions to the letter. *You need not enter the house again.*"

He stared at her in astonishment, not knowing the depth of her abhorrence of him, because ignorant of that worst deed of which she believed him guilty. He collected himself speedily and replied,

"My horse kicked the child and broke her leg. I have set the bone, and I shall see how the thing is working. If neglected the child may be crippled; I will have no other doctor touch her. I shall come as long as I think it necessary. This is no time to let personal animosity affect your conduct."

Eunice's face was full of trouble and perplexity. True, there was no other surgeon they could have to look after Yolande, so she said bitterly,

"If you *must*, you *must*; but the *horror* of it—you putting your hands on Ben's child!"

He made no reply, but went away wondering that he did not resent this woman's evident estimate of his character. If he had been Ben's murderer she could hardly have repelled him more fiercely. She did say, "If you must murder my brother!" Alas! In the sight of God—if there *was* a God—might not the man who led Ben along in his sad career be justly called his murderer? To-day Ben might have been a good and happy man, the possessor of these fields along which Dr. Grantley walked, if the doctor had not enticed him from home.

In his path as he went lay the little white sun-bonnet where it had fallen off the soft curls. Poor little creature! He was not fit to touch her in her innocence. By strange ways the Father in heaven leads

men. One would have thought the logic of some powerful preacher, the shock of some awful judgment, must awaken this worldly, unbelieving soul; but to-day two things had strangely shaken Dr. Grantley: first, the knowledge, as he stood with flowers for the invalid in his hands, that he was not good enough to take them to a woman like Maria Wells, and now the pain of realizing that Eunice's horror was born of the thought that he should touch *another* of their loved ones.

His patients found him as testy as ever that day. Mrs. Tibbits earnestly longed for a second call from the minister, and Helen did not so much as venture to knock on the shut door of the office and tell him that her lessons were learned and she was ready to recite them.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"Deal not roughly with him that is tempted, but give him comfort, as thou wouldst wish to be done to thyself."

**E**UNICE HOPKINS was an excellent nurse, and, burdened though she was with their domestic trouble, she developed wonderful gifts in the way of comfort, and even entertainment, for the poor child. Her touch was very tender and her sharp voice low and sweet as she sat by Yolande's bedside. She gave up entirely all household duties save those most imperative. At Yolande's request she brought her apron full of gay hollyhocks from the garden, and obediently fashioned them into men, women and babies after a quaint fashion of the fanciful little girl. While her clumsy fingers were busy with the silky pink blossoms she would tell story after story of events which once happened in this same old house and garden. Every article of furniture had its history,

and was connected with the happy days which Yolande fancied peculiarly golden because Eunice referred to them so reverently. The father whom she had never seen she now imagined as a bright-eyed, curly-haired boy—a brother Ben with whom she would have had great frolics had she herself only chanced to belong to those earlier days.

The deacon also spent many hours in the cool shaded room, but he rarely talked. If she grew restless at his silence, he sang old hymns, falling often between verses into long, sad reveries.

When Dr. Grantley came, Eunice, at the first sound of his footstep, would spring to her feet and leave him to visit Yolande alone, only staying within call if he needed her. The doctor much preferred that she should stay out of the room, for the child prattled away to him without fear or any apparent aversion, and he could be more gracious when out from under the woman's eye. One day he had a harvest apple in his pocket, and Yolande, espying it, supposed of course he had brought it to her. He did not tell

her he had not done so, but gave it into her little hand. She dropped it by her side, and, reaching up, drew his face down, that she might kiss him. He touched the childish lips almost in fear, glancing back the instant after to see if Eunice was in sight. She was in the garden, for he heard her calling the chickens, so he smoothed the little one's golden-brown curls and said,

"Do they tell you that you look like—anybody?"

"Grandpa says I look like mamma. Aunt Eunice didn't see her before she went away to heaven, but grandpa did see her, and I came back here with him. Aunt Eunice isn't like mamma one bit, but I love her." She waited a moment before glancing through the open door at an old-fashioned looking-glass in the kitchen, and she added: "Aunt Eunice cries sometimes, just as my mamma cried when she thought I couldn't see her. I did see her in that glass yesterday, and she went and stood ever and ever so long by that high old mantel-piece, and she kissed it once, just as if it was *somebody*. Wasn't that funny? We are going to move—did you know

that?—but Aunt Eunice doesn't know where. I guess she doesn't care much about it; she says, 'Never mind,' when I ask her if it will be prettier than this place."

The doctor interrupted the child's confidences by getting ready to go, and when Eunice came from the garden Yolande was alone and asleep.

That same afternoon the doctor visited Maria Wells. When the strictly professional part of his duty was done he had fallen into the way of staying to talk a while with his patient on many and varied topics. He had almost no social intercourse with any one, and he enjoyed these informal conversations. She surprised him by her knowledge of human nature, of the motives that move people, and of the means by which they may be made to act or not to act. When he half playfully desired to know how she had become so wise, she, in the same laughing way, declared she had only followed the example of all great philosophers and looked within herself.

"Mother has been telling me of poor little Yolande Hopkins," she said this day



when Dr. Grantley leaned back in the arm-chair always now set out for him; "but I am so glad she is getting on nicely, and perhaps it will keep Eunice from brooding over her own troubles. Is it not sad that they must leave the old homestead?"

"They feel it to be so, I've no doubt."

"Yes, indeed, as we would feel it in their places. I hoped Judge Balcom would not push matters as he has done, but mother says there is a man from Castleton who wants to buy the place, with full possession at once. I told mother I was sure that the deacon could borrow the money to pay off the mortgage, but she says he will not make any effort of the kind, because he does not know when he could pay. Eunice says if the blow is to be unceasingly threatening them, she would rather have it fall at once."

Maria's cheeks were flushed and her dark eyes were soft with sympathy.

The doctor was apparently lost in the study of a little engraving on the wall, but she continued:

"I think perhaps the judge might have

been more easy with the Hopkinses, but he is very angry at Mr. Halsay."

"What has the parson done?—tried to make peace and burnt his own fingers?"

"He preached a sermon on brotherly kindness last Sunday, and Judge Balcom is sure he meant to make a personal application of some part of it to this affair of his with Deacon Hopkins. Mr. Potter thinks Mr. Halsay never once thought of doing such a thing."

"How these Christians love one another!" said the doctor dryly.

Maria made no answer to that, but after a time she said,

"Did you ever know a better man than Deacon Hopkins?"

"I have had very little to do with the old man for years past. Probably you know him well, if I do not." He stirred uneasily in his chair, then went on, rather sternly: "We have nothing in common, possibly just because he is, as you say, *so good*. You admit me to your home, Miss Wells, as a physician able to treat your case—I fully believe I am that—but I do not come labeled as a

*good* man, according to Conesus Corners' ideas of goodness. I am far from being a monster of iniquity, or even immoral, but Eunice Hopkins would cross herself when I appeared if she were a Roman Catholic."

"I don't know what you call 'Conesus Corners' ideas.' I suppose there is only one way to be good."

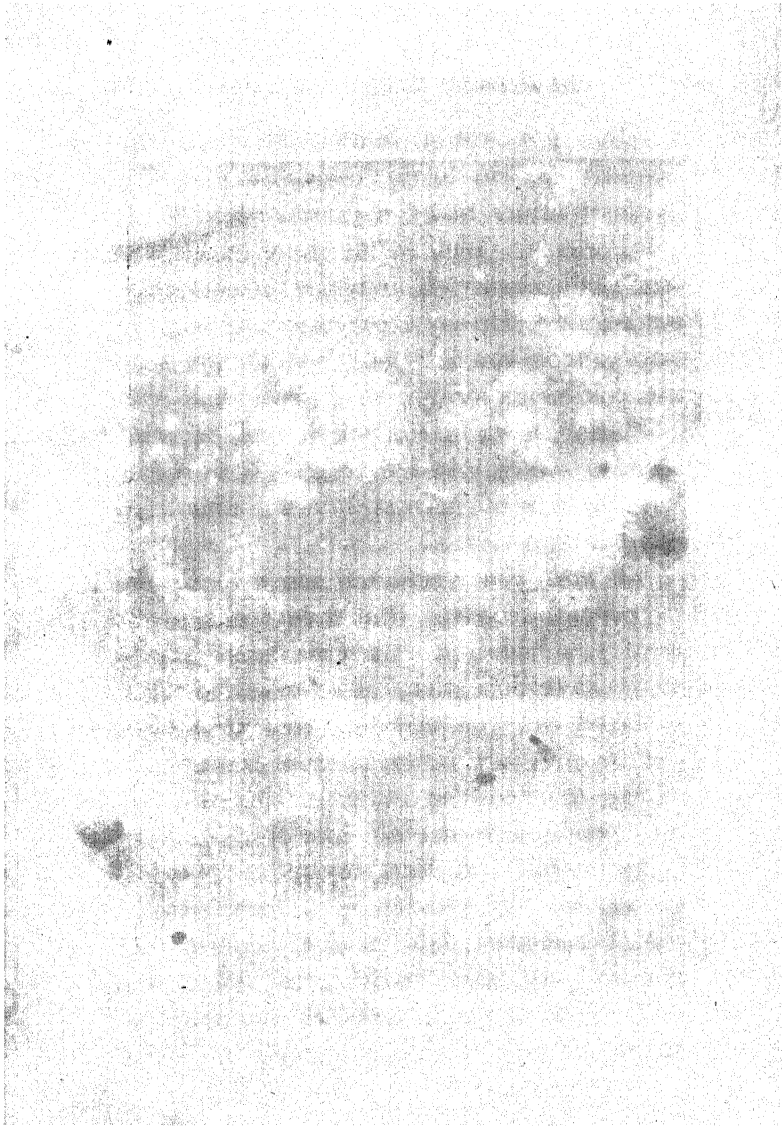
"How? if I may ask. I am more curious about Maria Wells's ideas than about the Corners' code of morals."

The flush deepened on the woman's face as she recited in a low, even voice, "'One of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the *first* and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"My visiting-list is not made up of those of whom I could conscientiously assert that they carried out this faultless programme," was the listener's cool comment.



Dr. Grantley's visit to Maria Wells.



"But you would find many who were honestly *anxious* to do it—who were trying to do it under many discouragements?"

"Perhaps. Well, I fall short on the first half, and Eunice Hopkins, who is a thorough-going Presbyterian sister, I believe, trips up on the last half: she simply *hates* me, her neighbor."

Maria raised herself on her elbow, and, looking straight in Dr. Grantley's face, said with a tone of earnest interest, almost of sympathy,

"I wish you would tell me *why* Eunice does not like you. She once spoke to me as if you had injured her or hers."

"I have done that," he replied grimly.

"And can you make no reparation?"

"Never—in this world or in the next."

She marked the bitterness in his tone, and persisted with child-like fearlessness:

"You could at least repent and be forgiven."

"If remorse could avail I have felt it. As for forgiveness, what good would that do? I don't grudge Eunice the relief of hatred, if it is a relief."

“Oh, I can’t believe this of her. She is a woman of very strong feelings, but—” Maria hesitated a moment in her eagerness, then went on:

“Why, even in the mouth of an old pagan a writer has put these words: ‘Of all the powerful impulses which stir our hearts, only one belongs wholly to the Evil One. Hate is a devastator, and in the soul that it occupies all that is noble grows not upward toward the light, but downward to the earth and darkness. Everything may be forgiven by the gods save only hatred between man and man.’ I read and thought of that yesterday, and I believe it.”

“Then we will agree that Eunice Hopkins loves me.”

He spoke almost sneeringly, and at first had no mind to say more; but, sitting there in that quiet room with this frail woman, whose life was so uplifted above all strife and turmoil, it all at once seemed to him that he could tell her how dark and unsatisfying his own life had been—how baneful his influence on others. To what end he would do this he did not consider; he would

at least let her see why Eunice abhorred him.

"I will show you the whole matter," he began, very impulsively for him; and thereupon he went back to his first acquaintance with Ben Hopkins, and told her the whole story of their later intercourse. He admitted that he had possessed almost unbounded influence over Ben, and now realized that that influence had been harmful—never anything else. In detail he told of their city-life, of their first acquaintance with Yolande's mother, of Ben's marriage, and finally of the tragic ending to his young life. The narration was sometimes slow and labored, as if the doctor half regretted his confession, but oftener he talked rapidly, as if glad to unburden his soul to some interested listener.

Such a listener he had in Maria throughout the whole story. He made no excuses for himself, he begged for no sympathy, feeling that he deserved none; yet it touched him inexpressibly to feel that over and above Maria's appreciation of the deacon's grief at Ben's conduct—that over and above her pity



for Ben's wife and for Eunice—she was sorry for him, the sinner.

“It is a sad, sad story,” she said when he ceased talking, “and I can easily see how, to a woman like Eunice Hopkins, the sight of one so connected with her brother's career must be suggestive of many, very many, painful thoughts. You, it may be, have always seemed to her without regret, careless and indifferent. You have never told her you were sorry—”

“Never!” broke in Dr. Grantley impetuously. “She is a woman with hot blood, not water, in her veins. I am not blaming *her*. When I broke little Yolande's leg did I help matters by saying, ‘I am sorry’? She burst out on me like a fury. Would she do any less, believing as she does that I ruined Ben, soul and body, if I went whining, ‘I am sorry’? That does not give them back the boy. I would die gladly if he might live again for them, but—”

“But they do not *know* it; they believe you care nothing. I tell you, it does make a difference.”

"In what? Not in the past."

"In their feelings toward you."

"I don't care what they feel toward me."

She did not believe him, but she could find nothing to say for a moment; then her eyes filled with tears, and she murmured,

"God help you!—the deacon and Eunice and *you*."

He tried to look unconcernedly out of the open window, but he did not see the swaying elm tree outside nor hear the twitter of the birds. The lines about his stern mouth softened a little; he arose soon, saying,

"Take a spoonful of my last prescription, and send your doctor home if he ever stays and tires you out again."

She did not listen to him: a new thought had absorbed her, and her face was very pale, her voice sharp with excitement, as she spoke out suddenly:

"Dr. Grantley, you are not a poor man, are you?" He stared at her in surprise as she added quickly, "Are you not what here at the Corners is called '*well off*'?"

"I suppose I am," he answered: "I can afford to give away unnumbered pills and

powders if I like, or to stop giving them at all."

Her breath came so fitfully she could hardly go on:

"Then will you not in some way secure the Hopkins's home to them? You could do it, and end Eunice's hard feelings."

"Offer them money in exchange for their only son and brother—placate them with a gift? *You* don't know the Hopkins race."

"Oh, I don't believe they would look at it in that way," she exclaimed, distressed and frightened, now that her words had been uttered.

"We each see with the eyes we happen to possess: we can do no more," he returned, taking his hat from the table and going out with a simple "Good-afternoon."

## CHAPTER XXII.

"It is great wisdom not to be rash in thy doings, nor to stand firmly in thine own conceit."

THE Sunday after Judge Balcom's indignant departure from his usual place of worship he marched the length of the little village main street and entered the Methodist church, followed by his meek and patient wife. He was pleasantly greeted by the minister after the morning exercises were over, but it chagrined him somewhat that no great excitement attended his movements. Privately, the good Methodist brethren were more embarrassed than delighted by this accession to their ranks.

The judge himself felt—well, rather important. He had asserted himself. In a letter to the Rev. Justus Halsay—a letter full of polysyllabic wrath and weighty with scriptural quotations rounding off vague denunciations of blind leaders of the blind—

he had let that gentleman know that he could henceforth count on him as a high-toned enemy. He had thrown the most expensive pew in the church back on the hands of the trustees, and had refused to pay another cent of an extra amount due on the minister's salary. Lastly, he had admonished the session to bestir itself to get rid of "this man Halsay" and get some one who could draw members in instead of driving them away. When this was accomplished, and not until then, would he return. Twenty persons had joined the church under the new minister, but the judge was thinking of quality, not quantity, when he expressed himself in this way.

Wishing to satisfy all faultfinders, he had given the deacon a few more weeks in which to "turn himself," although the latter, ungratefully as he thought, assured him he could do nothing in that time.

Herbert Balcom had little interest in what he called this "tempest in a teapot." He liked Mr. Halsay; he had for weeks been conversing with him in regard to his prospective travels, and he did his best to soothe

his father's offended dignity. It was all in vain. So, as the time of Bert's departure drew near, everything else was forgotten in the excitement of his leave-taking. He had become very popular in the town during his vacations; every one wished him well and prophesied great things for him in the years to come. The night before he left the Corners for New York City, where he was to stay a few days before he sailed,—that night the judge gave the most stylish party ever given in the place. “*Caperers*” from the nearest city (to quote Mrs. Tibbits) arranged the supper: there was a band of music in the balcony; and every respectable young person for miles around was made happy by an invitation to the feast. For years after traditions of that “Balcom party” were handed down from mother to daughter at Conesus Corners. It was told how the dishes were trimmed with flowers made of vegetables—“camellias cut out of turnips, and green lettuces dressed up as if they had been bonnets,” etc., etc. The editor of the *Conesus Corners Courier* made a farewell address to young Balcom full of compliment-

ary allusions to father and son. He became a trifle confused in marking out Bert's line of procedure on "classic soil," and he set the Acropolis on one the "seven hills" of Rome, but it might just as well have been there, for all the Conesus people knew or cared. So, taking all in all, Judge Balcom was a proud man as he watched his boy that night.

Dr. Grantley was present at the party with Helen. It had required much persuasion from the Balcoms to secure the doctor's presence, but the judge wanted "professional men, not merely farmers' sons," to do honor to the occasion.

It was Helen Grantley's first introduction to anything "really like society," as Mrs. Tibbits declared; but the young girl looked and appeared very pretty, modest and sensible. She never knew that a quite new turn to her life was the result of her going with the doctor to this party, but so it was.

Late in the evening Dr. Grantley was an unseen auditor of a gossiping talk about himself and Helen. A lady in another room, but not three feet from the library in which the doctor was, said to a companion,

"Yes, they say he is educating her for his wife; he teaches her himself in his leisure hours; no school here good enough. He dresses her very nicely lately, and Mrs. Tibbits says she may do just what she likes in that old, gloomy house."

"Do tell!" was next said; "but she is a cousin or niece, and he is an infidel and ugly."

"I can't help it; he lets her go to church. No; they say she is not very nearly related."

That was enough. The doctor was surprised, but not sorry that he had accepted the judge's invitation.

The next day he called Helen and Mrs. Tibbits into his office and had a very business-like conversation. He said he had satisfied himself that Helen had a fine mind, and he had resolved to educate her for a teacher, that in time to come she might be entirely independent. He wished her to procure school-catalogues and let him see them—to consult with intelligent outsiders and discuss what boarding-school they had better decide on for her home during the next four or five years. He charged Mrs. Tibbits with the duty of getting her ready at once.



"Oh, I am so glad, Dr. Grantley! I cannot thank you enough," cried Helen.

"Then you do not dread the idea?"

"I like it very much. It is something I have longed for, but did not suppose I could attain to."

Later in the day there came a rap on the office-door, and Helen entered in answer to the doctor's loud "Come in."

She went to the table by which he sat, and, visibly trembling, said,

"I ought to tell you one thing before you agree to educate me, for it may make a difference."

"What is it?"

"I have become a Christian."

"At what time, by the hour and minute-hands of the clock?"

The words were mocking, but the tone was not as harsh as it would once have been; so the young girl answered simply,

"Since I have prayed and studied my Bible, and since Maria Wells has taught me a great deal I never knew or thought of before."

"Are you any better satisfied with yourself?"

"I see much more to live for and to do and to become, and I am far more contented not to be and to do some other things," returned Helen, finding it hard to stand before this man whose lips seemed curling into a sneer.

"Well, that reply is indefinite enough to be oracular, but I suppose it is all a mystery to the uninitiated like myself. However, I am sure a Christian needs an education as well as a pagan. It makes no difference with the school-plan."

"Thank you. I think you are very kind," murmured Helen, turning away; and her gratitude pleased Dr. Grantley, for he rarely gave any one reason to thank him.

The next weeks were busy ones to the young girl, but she sang like a bird about the house. Mrs. Tibbits for the first time awoke to the realization of the fact that Helen's church-going had meant something to her; she resolved to brave the doctor's sarcasm and go henceforth herself. Surely it was a strange change in the sharp-spoken, discontented girl, this which caused her to ask Mrs. Tibbits's pardon for the trouble she had given her in the past.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

"When thou thinkest thyself farthest off from Me, oftentimes I am nearest unto thee. When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes the greatest gain of reward is close at hand."

UNCLE ZEB POTTER had come to the doctor's office to get something for his wife's liver, and, having got it, he lingered as usual for a chat:

"Well, young Balcom sails to-morrow; they say he went down to the city Monday night. A fine chap Bert is."

"Oh, he is well enough," grumbled the doctor, "but I'll be glad when he clears the country, for I'm bored almost to death with the judge's talk about him. No old hen with one surprising chicken ever kept up such a clatter and fuss."

"The jedge is goin' on to-night to see him off. There he comes this here minit, doctor, and a-pointin' straight for your office."

"He has forgotten to tell me the last com-

pliment Bert received or the latest smart speech he made, but he seems in a mighty hurry."

Before Uncle Zeb could make another remark in his turn the office-door was flung quickly open, and both men started at the pallor of the judge's face and the agitation of his manner. He held a torn envelope and a telegram in his hand, which last he thrust before the doctor, who read it aloud at once:

"Your son is ill at the St. James Hotel—typhoid fever."

Dr. Grantley had scarcely taken in the meaning of the message when the judge, clutching his arm, exclaimed breathlessly,

"The next train leaves at eleven-fifty. You must go with me, Grantley. You *shall*. I'll pay you double, treble, for time lost here. You will have the best city counsel, but I must have you to watch him night and day. You haven't lost a fever case in a long time, have you, doctor?"

Seeing the doctor hesitate an instant, he half entreated, half commanded him:

"Say! speak! I must get to his mother;

we must start by the first train. Will you go?"

"Yes."

"And go prepared to stay days—weeks, if necessary. Of course this is the end of his sailing for a while yet;" and the judge grew a little calmer, having gained the doctor's consent to going with him. He turned about, snatched up the telegram and hastened home. Mr. Potter, knowing that the doctor must now have much to attend to, left him without a word more.

A little before noon the judge, Dr. Grantley and Mrs. Balcom (a gentle little lady, and a loving little mother to Bert) started for New York. In due time they reached the city and the hotel. A college friend of Bert's met them, and told them that the young man from the hour of his arrival had complained of a terrible pain in his head; he had grown more and more ill, and that morning had developed serious symptoms. The father and mother were assured that he had received constant care—that the physician summoned was a man of skill and fine reputation, but their hearts sank within

them as they traversed the grand halls toward Bert's room.

"My poor boy, this is too bad!" exclaimed the judge when they entered the door; "but we'll have you up soon: I have brought Dr. Grantley with me."

Young Balcom raised himself on his elbow, and in all his life he had never looked better, for his eyes were flashing, his cheeks flushed with fever:

"Yes, father, we'll go over the Simplon, but have you got the passport?—and all the Greek verbs came to that party. It was hard—his head ached fearfully on the mountains."

Dr. Grantley went near and quietly put him back on the pillow, feeling his pulse meanwhile; but the father was completely unmanned. He clung to the footboard and cried like a child: that Herbert would not be rational had not occurred to him.

So the fight for life began, and was renewed day after day, day after day. Dr. Grantley could not have done more for a brother. Physicians came and went. The judge poured out his money like water.

Hotel men and maids, mindful of fees, vied with one another to wait upon the watchers and attendants. A trained night-nurse relieved a trained day-nurse, but nobody could keep the judge from his idolized boy more than an hour or two at a time. He watched every potion given, he studied every face with pathetic eagerness. His pomposity fell off as he plead with each doctor to "study the case"—"try something different." Still, he never once admitted to himself that Herbert *could* die. That word was not even spoken in his presence until about the fourteenth day, when he saw the attendants often whispering together. He waited impatiently until Dr. Grantley had gone alone into a little room kept for the watchers' resting-place; then he followed, and, falling on the doctor as if he would tear the truth out of him, he gasped,

"Is the boy worse?"

"Yes, judge, he is worse."

"Do you think he may die?"

The doctor had to answer slowly,

"I fear he can't hold out. I never saw a fever rage as his has; he—"

But with a heartbroken cry the father had fallen on a couch:

"He *must* live, doctor! He *shall* live! The Almighty wouldn't take *that* boy away from me. He's more to me than my own soul. What can be done? Oh, prayers must move God. Come, down on your knees, Grantley, and we'll pray."

The tears were rolling down his face, while the doctor was asking himself if this bowed, shaking creature could be the proud Judge Balcom of Conesus Corners. His own eyes were dim, but he stammered,

"*You* pray, judge; I'm not a Christian. I'd do anything else, but I can't pray."

"*You shall try,*" cried the father, beside himself with anguish. But no, you don't believe; call my wife."

She came at the moment uncalled, her pale face so void of hope that he gave her only one glance, and, pulling her down beside him, broke out into prayer. Dr. Grantley sat with bowed head, in reverence for a grief such as he had rarely seen. So sitting, he listened to the strangest prayer he had ever heard.



Perhaps it was the judge's *first* real-prayer, the only one that ever came from out the depths of his nature. How he begged for that boy's life, and unconditionally! God's will must be his will. How he promised! how he revealed himself! He told the Lord that Bert was his idol, but if he would restore him to health he himself would be a better man. He dealt in no grand generalities, but he vowed that he would build a new Presbyterian church—he would go back and humble himself to the minister. He confessed that he had been jealous of Deacon Hopkins's reputation for piety, and angry at old Zeb Potter for not seeming to respect his theological learning. He confessed that he never had family prayers unless a minister was visiting him, but that he was proud of praying well in the prayer-meeting. He'd come right down and confess his failings to anybody and everybody if that boy of his might again walk the earth a well man. As he wailed, "O God! O God! give him back to me!" Grantley's chin quivered like a baby's. To be consistent he ought to have despised the judge, but

he never had felt so warmly toward him in his life.

That night the fever began to abate, but it was succeeded by a stupor. Once or twice the young man smiled into his mother's white face, and one morning he murmured,

"It was a short voyage, father—almost over, then a new country."

An hour later he was dead.

There was chaos after that in the judge's heart and brain. It was Dr. Grantley who made all the necessary arrangements. Judge Balcom sat dumb by the motionless feet and vaguely wondered that the frail mother could speak or think. When he was not finding it strange that the roar of Broadway went on, that the stream of happy life had not stopped there, he was realizing that God had not answered his prayer. Why not?

They started on a train that brought them into the station nearest the Corners about six in the evening, and on the same train with them was the coffin with Herbert's body and the boxes holding his treasures, so carefully marked for a "new country," but not that one whither he had gone.

As the judge tottered down from the car he looked up and saw on the platform scores of silent, sad-faced friends and neighbors; nearest to him stood old Deacon Hopkins and Uncle Zeb Potter. He stretched out his arms suddenly and let them fall on theirs, and, so supported, sobbed,

"The Lord has smitten me!"

"But he bindeth up the broken in heart, brother," said the deacon, for Uncle Zeb was crying like a child and could not speak.

The solemn little procession passed along in the shadow of nightfall and entered the Balcom mansion. Friends and neighbors had done everything for the stricken family that friends could do, and now they only lingered to hear what time had been set for the funeral.

"To-morrow afternoon," replied Mrs. Balcom; "I suppose we had better say two o'clock."

"And the minister?" asked Deacon Hopkins gently.

A faint flush passed over the judge's white, haggard face when Mrs. Balcom hesitated to answer, but he said distinctly, "Mr. Halsay

—Herbert liked him.” Then he turned quickly to Grantley and added, “Go home, doctor, and rest; you have had a hard time. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You did all you could for my boy, but we’re powerless creatures, after all.”

The doctor pressed his hand with respectful sympathy, and went his way homeward. It was after twilight now, and the September crickets were making lonesome music. Everything seemed weird and half-unfamiliar in the aspect of the place, but strangest of all was the impression left by the judge’s last words. The haughty, self-sufficient man had come to see himself a “powerless creature.” Why? Because the finger of the Lord had touched him.

What an *honest* prayer that was the judge had uttered! Why was it not answered? The doctor stopped, and there, in the starlight, tried without skeptical prejudice to think it out as a reasoning Christian might do. The Lord knew best, of course, and Bert died just as Ben Hopkins died, without any reference to the hardness of Judge Balcom’s heart or the softness of the

deacon's. But *could* God answer such a prayer as Judge Balcom's and be God? The judge was in earnest truly, but thought he might bribe the Almighty with gifts—that he might bring the Maker of heaven and of earth to his terms, and in a moment of extremity establish Judge Balcom's will. Had the prayer gone unnoticed? Was it the working of any superhuman Power that had changed the arrogant, self-sufficient man into a "powerless creature"?

Like a solemn chant came into his mind the words of the old psalm: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men."

The doctor went on then, awed, half-astonished, at the intensity of his own emotions. In the days that followed he could not escape from the idea of God as he on that night apprehended him. In his inmost heart he could soon say, "*Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

"If thou canst not make thyself such an one as thou wouldst, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking? If all men were perfect, what should we have to suffer of our neighbor for the sake of God?"

ONE morning Dr. Grantley found at the post-office a letter for him, post-marked at a town in Iowa. He opened it, curiously glanced at the signature, and received no enlightenment from that. He knew no "Mrs. Emeline Hayward," but the reading of the letter made him stand among the crowd of post-office idlers oblivious to everything and to every one. At last he put it in his pocket and walked slowly homeward. At his gate he turned again, and went to the lane that ran down to Deacon Hopkins's wood-lot.

The old man was there chopping, and did not see him until he stood close beside him in a little green amphitheatre; then he start-

ed, frightened lest there were some bad tidings from Yolande.

"Is the child—is anything wrong?" he stammered.

"No; she is doing remarkably well," answered the doctor; and at the sound of his voice the deacon suddenly remembered that these were the first words that had passed between them for years. He took off his broad hat, pushed back his white hair, asking simply, as a little flush crept into his wrinkled cheeks,

"Are you well yourself, doctor?"

"Yes, thank you; but I came to talk a while. Will you sit down here with me?"

They were soon seated on logs, when the doctor began:

"You have had no reason to think me a friend in these years gone by, but I never knew until this morning the chief reason of the evident abhorrence that both you and your daughter feel for me. I supposed you hated me on general principles, and I have—" He hesitated, for confession comes hard to a man like Dr. Grantley; then he asked, "Did you ever hear from any per-

son the particulars of your son Ben's death?"

The deacon recoiled as if he now first realized a dreadful fact, and replied,

"Yes—Ben's wife told me all before she died."

"She told you what she thought was truth, but if she believed that her husband fell by my hand she was deceived. I have enough of wrong on my conscience, but not that—no, not that. Let me read you this letter and tell you the absolute truth, no more, no less."

The deacon sat shivering in the warm sunshine while scarcely less-agitated Dr. Grantley read the woman's letter. She began by telling of her efforts to find his address, which were long unsuccessful. Her husband, who had been an acquaintance of Grantley's, had died of consumption six months previous to the date of her letter. A little while before his death he had gained her solemn promise to send his confession to Dr. Grantley—a confession that he had told Ben's wife that the doctor shot her husband—that he had by variations of this lie



succeeded in clearing himself and keeping the affair from coming out plainly before the public. Grantley's name, residence and profession were unknown, and so long as no harm came to *him*, Hayward silenced his conscience by doing for the widow and assuring himself that as the shooting was purely accidental, and he drunk at the time, he himself was a lucky man to go free, as he had succeeded in doing.

Finishing the letter, the doctor went back and told the real story of that dreadful night. The deacon listened with his face buried in his hands, a faint groan now and then his only comment. When Grantley ended they sat a moment in silence, save for the sound of wood-chopping in the distance.

"If you suppose," added the doctor, "that now that I think I have justified myself I fancy my hands are clear, you are mistaken. I never did Ben any good, but only harm. I was a curse to him, and I *know* it. You can tell Miss Eunice that I am not quite a devil, for that thought does not make my own life happy, and never has."

"God pity you, doctor, and forgive you as

I do and have forgiven you long ago! You hurt Ben's life, but the Lord has not taken from me all hope in his death. There are things which I treasure in my heart. They seem to me like proofs that Ben repented—that his face was turned homeward, and that, like the prodigal, he was seeking his Father's house. Maybe I am too hopeful, but this trust cheers me here on earth, and hereafter there shall be no more 'sorrow nor crying,' for 'God shall wipe away all tears' from my eyes in heaven."

"Will you keep the letter and show it to Eunice? It concerns no one else now," said the doctor, rising.

"Yes, gladly. Eunice is—"

"Eunice. Good-morning."

The deacon held out his wrinkled hand, and the doctor grasped it for the first time in many years; then the old man returned to his work and Dr. Grantley stopped on his way home to see Yolande. He caught sight of Eunice's calico dress disappearing out of one door as he entered the kitchen by another door, but Yolande was ready to welcome him with a bright smile.

The child could sit up in a chair now and play with her dolls, particularly the new Warrenton purchase. The doctor's call was short to-day, but when he left her he gave her a big yellow envelope, saying,

"There is something for the little girl whom my horse kicked. Keep it safe with grandpa's papers."

"I will: it isn't very pretty," returned the child, frankly.

Eunice made sure the intruder had departed before she came back to get dinner ready. Yolande wanted nothing, so she set the table and blew the old tin horn to summon her father.

How cool and clean the great kitchen was! how tempting the simple meal! She stood in the door waiting for him, as she had waited every summer for twenty years and more. When he came and had washed his face he must see little "sweetheart" before he ate. She, for her part, must know if he liked a yellow basque on the wax doll as well as he would like a purple cape.

"Come, come, father! the potatoes are getting cold," called Eunice.

"And see here, grandpa, this old yellow paper thing the doctor gave me. He said the horse sent it to me, I believe."

The deacon smiled, and put on his spectacles to examine it closer:

"Eunice! come here!"

Something in his voice caused her to drop a ladle and come at once to stand in the bedroom-door.

His face was very bright as he exclaimed,

"Dr. Grantley has paid up all I owe to Judge Balcom, and has turned that amount over to Yolande! Here are the papers. Here, too, is a note plain enough; he says it is a small thing to do, compared with the pain he has caused her and those who love her. The dear old home is ours now, Eunice—think of it!"

His eyes were so dim with tears that he did not see her face grow dark. It shocked him inexpressibly when she broke out harshly,

"It is blood-money! Does he think he can pay us with dollars and cents for what he did? Fling it in his face, father, and tell him it is with the Lord he must settle for his sins."

“Eunice Hopkins,” said the deacon with low, sorrowful sternness, “you know not what manner of spirit you are of. Beware how you hate and judge and condemn. Remember your Saviour’s warning. You will have more charity for Dr. Grantley when I tell you that he acknowledges that he sinned in leading Ben on to evil—” Then of a sudden they remembered Yolande’s presence and withdrew from the room, Eunice still quivering with indignation.

“And, daughter, we have done him some injustice in believing him to have— But you don’t know of the letter yet, do you?”

He drew out the Iowa letter and thrust it into Eunice’s hand.

She carried it over to the window and read it from beginning to end; then without a word she took the papers left with Yolande and examined them. When she laid them down it was to say grimly,

“After all, it is given to the child—not left to you or to me to accept or to refuse it. It will be a galling recollection to me henceforth, never an obligation for real gratitude.”

"Eunice, can you say the Lord's Prayer now-a-days?"

"No, I can't—I haven't for a long time;" and, bursting into tears, Eunice swept past the old man and out into the garden.

He looked after her sorrowfully, and, sitting down by the untasted food, began to wonder if he was mean-spirited in his old age. No, it could not be that Christ meant to have any uncertain rule when he said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Besides, Dr. Grantley was not now acting like an enemy, but rather like one who sought to be a friend. Should he be repelled?

The deacon ate his solitary meal, and went back to his work with a heart that grew lighter every moment of the long, beautiful afternoon.

Poor Eunice had another fight all alone with—Eunice.

## CHAPTER XXV.

"For when the grace of God cometh unto a man, then he is made able for all things."

THERE were several persons at the Corners who occasionally brought Maria Wells fruit, flowers and books; there was one who loved especially to bring her good news, and this one was Uncle Zeb Potter. She welcomed him very cordially, therefore, one afternoon when his cheery old face appeared over a basket of early pears that Mother Potter had sent her:

"I am very glad to see you, Uncle Zeb; nobody has been in this week to visit me."

"I see the doctor droppin' in frequent. Is he helpin' ye any?"

"I hope he will help me. I have not seen him since he came back with the Balcoms last week; he must have been very tired."

"He was that; I never see a man look

worse used up. But I tell you, Conesus Corners will get good from that man in days to come."

"He is our best physician *now*."

"Of course, but I'm thinkin' of souls, not bodies; haven't ye heard the news, Marrier?"

He sincerely hoped she had not, and when she eagerly asked, "What news?" he continued:

"Wa'll, I will tell ye all about it. I dropped into the doctor's office this mornin' to get a strengthenin'-plaster for mother; she wears 'em now and then, and awful things they be too. The last stuck to her shoulder-blade so tight I had to take a hot flat-iron to her before I got it off. We were talkin', or I was, and he was broodin' over something. I concluded it was Herbert's case, for by and by he began to say how queer it seemed that he was out there in the cemetery, life all over for him. I said I could realize that almost as easy as—yes, easier than—I could believe I was actually listenin' to Judge Balcom last night at our Wednesday prayer-meetin'. Why, the man



was as meek as Deacon Hopkins! He said he had been proud and self-righteous—he had been bound to rule that church, from the minister down to the chap that blows the old organ, but he'd lost all desire for that now. All he wanted was to take up what was left of his life and do some good with it, while he followed the Lord Jesus Christ a good deal nearer than he ever followed him before. He asked Mr. Halsay's pardon then and there for the mean things he'd said about him. 'Most everybody's eyes got watery, I tell you. Eunice Hopkins set by me and behaved mighty queer. I never supposed Eunice was nervous before, but the judge's penitence seemed a leetle more than she could stand. The deacon said, 'Praise the Lord!' right out, and kep' a-sayin' it, his face shinin' like a blessed old angel's. I told the doctor all that, and he listened quiet-like until I said I hoped the judge would help the deacon over this rough spot in his business, and Dr. Grantley said that was all right now."

"It is?" asked Maria eagerly.

"Yes. I've heard since that Dr. Grantley

has straightened the whole thing out, some way or another."

Maria's face was so full of delight that Uncle Zeb went on with renewed animation:

"Just then who should come in but Judge Balcom himself! and right there, before the doctor, he tells *me* how sarcastical he has been to *me*, and how he had tried to make me keep still in prayer-meetin' by hints and digs. I always knowed he was *'mean-in'* me at such times—I couldn't say I didn't—but it just broke me all down to have him go on a-tellin' how he'd be glad if I'd speak out plain about his besettin' sins in the future if I saw he needed it.

"The doctor he just sat stock-still until we got sort of settled down toward commoner kind of talk, then he spoke right out sudden:

"'If ever a man was convicted of his sins, I am. If ever a man longed to begin a new life, I do. If ever a man needed pardon and hope and help from God for Christ's sake, I do. Will you two men pray for me?'"

"I don't know at all as he meant us to pray then and there, but I couldn't wait. I got down by the old settee, and by the shuffling of chairs I do expect those two once-stiff-necked, stiff-kneed critters got down too; and there was true prayin' done, for I didn't do it all. The judge prayed as if his heart was melted. When we got up the doctor says,

"I have begun this in earnest; I shall never go back if the Lord will lead me on. You can tell everybody; I want to be as open, if I am known hereafter as a Christian, as I have been bold and bitter as a scoffer."

"Isn't it glorious news?" ejaculated Zeb, catching a new gleam of joy in Maria's face.

Not waiting for any reply, the earnest old man went on:

"I was so happy I could not keep myself from goin' over to Deacon Hopkins's. The deacon he took it all as if it was good, very, very good, but something he almost had reason to expect; but Eunice turned as white as a ghost. A body would have said she was scared at something. She never said it was wonderful or good; she just appeared as if

she had got a shock of some sort. She never put in one word while her father and I was rejoicin'. We talked for an hour, more or less, and by and by the deacon's little granddaughter wanted her cot bed pulled out in the kitchen, where we sat. Eunice roused up and did it, but then she set down by the child and hid her face in the bed-clothes. We didn't appear to notice, but I began to understand. I tell ye, Marier, when any man or woman who has his or her sins forgiven once starts out a-hatin' a fellow-critter, it don't mean just what it does when one sinner hates another. The sinner knows what he's about, and is never took by surprise—he never supposes he is doing *right*; but the Christian kind of cheats himself into thinkin' he is only 'hatin' evil,' and that because he 'fears the Lord.' He calls his passion 'righteous indignation,' and lots of private grudges get plastered over with that; he fancies it to be 'zeal for the right.' He builds up a great monument to his wrath, and some day when he is restin' under it the Spirit of the Lord breathes on it, and I reckon the poor Christian thinks the uni-

varse is a-tumblin' down around his ears and he's goin' to perish in the ruins. Eunice has hated the doctor, and he knows it as well as anybody.

"Wa'll, I was just gittin' ready to go, when in comes Dr. Grantley himself to see the child. The little bed was opposite the open door, and he didn't see us old fellows in the corner. He'd scarcely come over the threshold when Eunice rose up suddent, and, leanin' right over Ben's little one, stretched out both her hands to the doctor. She did her best to say something, but she couldn't; her mouth was twitchin' and the big tears chasin' down her cheeks. And Grantley's tongue wasn't a bit readier, but he grasped her hands and shook 'em well.

"Now, haven't I told you something worth listenin' to?" asked Uncle Zeb, leaning back in his chair and taking breath.

"I do not know what you could have told me that would have made me happier," she replied, her face so radiant that Uncle Zeb went home and told his wife that "Marier Wells was as pretty as a picture-angel, and gettin' fast ready to be a genuine one."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"For after winter followeth summer, after night the day returneth, and after a tempest a great calm."

TWO summers have come and gone at Conesus Corners, but they have wrought few outward changes. There are more white hairs on Judge Balcom's crown and he stoops a little, but his face must have grown younger or brighter, because children smile up into it now as he passes, and in the church they say "Brother Balcom" oftener than they say "Judge." Little Yolande Hopkins dares to run after him with flowers, just as she chases the deacon to frolic with him. Long ago her feet were as nimble as ever, and she never fails to assure Dr. Grantley that he "must have glued her all together as good as new, for she can't find any cracks."

In the old homestead Eunice goes contentedly about, at peace with herself as with

all the world; Uncle Zeb Potter tells her that a "forgivin' spirit and a lively child in her house" have made her much more lovable and "get-at-able."

The old man often stopped at the Hopkins house, and one Wednesday evening, having dropped in after prayer-meeting, he said to Eunice,

"You had a talk with that Grantley girl; didn't you find her a downright sensible critter for one of her age—real womanly, and pretty too, as far as that goes?"

"Yes; the doctor did well by her when he sent her to Glenthorpe. It is a school conducted on Christian and common-sense principles. I wonder if Helen is going back?"

"For certain she is; she's only home for vacation. Mrs. Tibbits says she's got three years more to stay, and then she is goin' to be a school-marm herself. How much more they do stuff into girls' heads now-a-days than they used to! They ain't such a precious sight handier, though. My old lady was equal to the best on 'em in her time, but she wasn't up in any 'ologies, unless it was a sort of good old Puritan theology. She

could spin and cook, sing like a lark, pray like a saint (she's good at any of them now), hitch up a horse and milk a cow. But times are a-changin'; folks is a-gittin'—a sort of gittin' on; and whereas they did one thing once, now they do some other."

"It seems as if Dr. Grantley would like Helen to keep house for him after she graduates," put in Eunice. "Mrs. Tibbits is as good as the day is long, but she is too simple to be very companionable to Dr. Grantley."

Uncle Zeb smiled to himself, and continued to smile so mysteriously that Eunice pounced on him exactly as if he had said something absurd:

"You'll find yourself mistaken on that point now, Mr. Potter!"

"We'll see what we'll see, Miss Hopkins."

"To be sure, she is a great deal better than I ever supposed she would be—she walks about her room—but that does not make a strong woman of her."

"The doctor says he don't want her for a housekeeper—that Mrs. Tibbits is good for years yet, and the art of housekeepin' won't die with her. Servants are plenty, but wo-



men like Marier Wells are not. She has stood out pretty well, but you'll see if he don't convince her yet that it is her *duty* to marry him. *I* set him on that track. I knew Marier loved him, for he's grown worthy of love, and he has shown his real sincerity to her; but, love or no love on her part, she refused to marry him—refused out and out: he told me so."

"Well, that ought to end it. I rather think if I said 'No,' a man would understand me."

"Exactly, Miss Hopkins. Oh, he understood her like a book, but it didn't make any difference with him; that's all. When the doctor sets out to do a thing, I've noticed he's apt to succeed."

Eunice paused in wiping a china cup and meditated before she returned:

"Well, then, Uncle Zeb, I hope he will succeed. In nine cases out of ten I'd disapprove of the whole thing, but Maria would make any man better and nobler; to have her in one's house would be like—like—I don't know exactly."

"Like flowers openin' the year 'round, or

birds singin' soft and unexpected, or sweet church-music on days when the east wind makes a body feel sort of ugly," said Uncle Zeb, supplying her lack of imagination.

"Yes, she is all of that. Sometimes I think that, next to Mr. Halsay, Maria has influenced more people for good than any one at the Corners; and she don't do it so much by talking (she ain't much of a talker), but by *being*—just by being."

"What a good lecture that was of Mr. Halsay's to-night!" broke out the deacon suddenly. "I was a-thinking how beautiful it was, and yet simple enough for me to tell it to our little girl here, when Judge Balcom said to me, coming home, that it was more wonderful than anything he ever found in science—this one truth of Christ's gospel that the minister dwelt on to-night."

Uncle Zeb answered reverently,

"I suppose the grandest and the truest things always be the simplest and the nearest to us; but it takes some of us all our lives to find it out. The few who see and know all this earliest we call saints or fanatics or poets, as it happens."

That same evening that Eunice and Uncle Zeb were enjoying their harmless chat about him, Dr. Grantley was enjoying a more earnest talk with Maria Wells. The doctor was earnest and Maria was all aglow with attention and responsive interest in his new thoughts of life and its responsibilities. As he spoke of his opportunities for helping his fellow-men and doing good, her eyes sparkled with a glad approbation.

"Yes, indeed," she said. "How much happier and more satisfying your life is now than it was!"

"Yes, I have a quiet conscience," returned the doctor, "but I know how I could be much happier."

Maria resumed her neglected sewing with great diligence and a very brilliant complexion.

"You do not know how much I have enjoyed this brief vacation visit of Helen's. My house is kept in perfect order by Mrs. Tibbits, but it is not a home; it is very desolate."

"Helen has developed into a very intelligent, charming girl," put in Maria, going on

with a brisk enumeration of the many good qualities she had observed in the young person under consideration.

The doctor listened patiently until Miss Wells spoke of the time when Helen would make his home more attractive.

"That time will not come," he answered. "She has three years more of school; then she wishes to teach; then, probably, she will marry or go on a mission or—do anything but come here. No," he continued dolefully, "I suppose I am very selfish and unreasonable. I do not *deserve* happiness after the hard, selfish life I have lived. I ought to be for ever grateful for the goodness I have received at the hands of the Lord, and should not ask continually for this happiness of a home such as other and better men enjoy."

Dr. Grantley was sincere, but if he had been artful to the utmost he could not have more surely furthered his cause with this true-hearted woman, who immediately must prove to him that he had a right to be happy. When she had made out a beautiful case the doctor struck off on a line somewhat

like this: If a man under the circumstances she mentioned had a right to happiness, and only one person of his acquaintance could make him happy, ought not that person to feel it a duty— But here he diverged, and for the rest there was much more special pleading than logic. Nevertheless, this particular evening's discussion could not have been without results, for the very next day Uncle Zebadiah Potter went directly from Dr. Grantley's office to Eunice Hopkins's kitchen and triumphantly chuckled,

“I told ye so.”

THE END.

